



## The Important Role of Member Satisfaction in Building Loyalty of Fitness Members during Covid-19 Pandemic

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**ABSTRACT:** This scientific paper provides an overview of the weaknesses of fitness centers in building member satisfaction in increasing member loyalty. The basis of this scientific article arises from the desire of researchers to measure the level of satisfaction felt by fitness members to build the loyalty of all members. The essence of the research idea is as a form of important ideas conveyed to build a positive level of satisfaction of fitness members through quality service to build the loyalty of members who are increasingly loyal to the center fitness. The sample in this study used all data on the number of center members' fitness. Referring to the research objectives following the right tools using the Structural Equation Model PLS-based (SEM) with the right measuring scale in previous studies using a quantitative approach. Service quality cannot build member loyalty independently. Good service quality can build member loyalty through the mediation of member satisfaction. The results of this study can contribute to building high member loyalty along with building member satisfaction as a mediation of the level of service quality perceived by members.

**KEYWORDS:** Fitness, Loyalty, Service Quality, Satisfaction.

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Research Background*

The shift in the pattern of development of people's living habits in general in recent years has changed in all sectors including the health sector, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed all habit patterns to live healthier lives. The quality of all forms of service is undergoing new adaptations. This condition is similar to the development of research results during the Covid-19 pandemic (Iskandar, Rhoma, et al. 2020).

Along with the shift in healthy lifestyle habits, it has an impact on fitness center service providers around the world, including in Indonesia. Matching the level of quality service with the standards of a healthy lifestyle is a challenge for fitness centers in providing services that are felt by their members.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on all fitness centers in maintaining the standardization of conformity with the level of service quality. Adaptation and innovation are key in maintaining service quality standards as attraction is special for members in assessing the level of service quality which has an impact on the level of member loyalty.

A serious problem faced by fitness centers to increase member satisfaction and loyalty is optimizing the level of service quality provided, the results of observations of fitness center members provide an assumption of perceptions of perceived service with findings that the level of cleanliness of equipment and fitness center area is not optimal following service standards. during the pandemic, so that it has an impact on the psychology of members to use the equipment, besides that the level of availability of existing equipment has not been able to optimally meet all members in using it. Members feel less freedom in using tools to practice. From the side service, the capacity of the training room which is still inadequate with a large number of members is one of the visible shortcomings for members in the level of service which leads to the level of satisfaction of its members. Satisfaction is an important factor in building loyalty (Yudiadari, et al 2020; Suwarsito, et al 2020; Alwi, et al 2021; Subali, et al 2021; Hermawan, et al 2021).

Service quality and satisfaction are problems and phenomena faced by all fitness center sectors in building high member loyalty during the pandemic. In various forms of service during the pandemic, it has been concluded from various research results that service quality is very influential (Iskandar, Rhoma, et al. 2020).



## Research Gap

This study adopted satisfaction as a variable mediating service quality to influence loyalty. Empirical studies of the effect of service quality on loyalty give positive and significant results (Nur Laely, *et al.*, 2020; Megantari, *et al.*, 2020; Alwi, *et al.*, 2021; Subali, *et al.*, 2021). Similar research others found different results from other research findings that there was no effect (Zahara, Rita, 2020). Satisfaction can mediate the effect of service quality on customer loyalty (Yudiadari, *et al* 2020).

## Formulation research problem

Referring to *Research Background* and *The research gap* that has been presented can provide direction and a clear picture of the formulation of the research problem. Does the quality of service have a direct positive effect on satisfaction and loyalty? Does satisfaction have a direct positive effect on loyalty and whether satisfaction significantly act as a mediation of the effect of service quality on loyalty?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality is a company's understanding of customers to be able to create superior value for customers on an ongoing basis (Taylor, 2001). *Service Quality* is a model that has been widely used in measuring service quality which was first developed (Parasuraman, *et al.*, 1988). The service quality model was developed as an efficient model to improve service quality in various forms of company services (Kabadayi and Cirpin, 2016). In addition to Parasuraman, *service quality* was also developed by (Zeithaml, 2010) using the same five dimensions, including *tangible*/physical evidence including physical appearance, equipment, and people working. *Empathy* is a form of caring by giving personal attention to customers. The next dimension is *Reliability*, in the form of the ability to carry out services as promised, accurately and reliably. The fourth dimension is *Responsiveness*/ responsiveness as a form of willingness to help customers and provide services appropriately and the last dimension is *Assurance* /assurance as a form of knowledge and courtesy of employees who can provide trust and confidence. *Service Quality* is one of the strong variables used to measure the quality of services such as hotels, banking, including fitness centers, gyms.

## Satisfaction

In general, customer (*satisfaction*) as a form of feeling happy or disappointed that arises from comparing the performance of the prepared product (or results) against their expectations (Kotler and Keller, 2009). Customer satisfaction will be closely related to the services provided (Zeithaml, 2010). When what is felt by customers has less value than expected, it will lead to feelings of disappointment (Hill & Alexander, 2017). Customer responses to satisfaction can be divided into three, including if performance fails to meet expectations, the customer will be dissatisfied, if performance matches expectations, the customer will be satisfied, if performance exceeds expectations, the customer will be very satisfied or happy (Kotler and Keller, 2009). The satisfaction model used in the research (Li and Petrick, 2010) includes being satisfied with the program/service, happy with the program/service, and satisfied with the decisions taken.

## Loyalty

Loyalty is said to be a product or service that is repurchased with commitment or is more popular in the future even though there is something that affects the atmosphere and marketing that has an impact on behavior change (Kotler and Keller, 2016). On the other hand, loyalty can be measured by looking at the extent to which the customer repurchases the service, shows a positive attitude towards the service provider, and will reuse it when the service need reappears (Wendha *et al*, 2013). Loyalty is also defined as a deep commitment to repurchase or repeat the pattern of product or service preferences in the future, which leads to the repurchase of the same brand or a set of the same brand, despite the involvement of factors, situational and marketing efforts that have the potential to cause behavior. switching brands (Engel, 2012). Loyalty models used in research (Pereira, *et al* 2016) include *Word of Mouth Communications* (word-of-mouth), *Purchase intention* (intention to buy/use), *Price sensitivity* (price sensitivity), *Complaining behavior* (submitting complaints).

## HYPOTHESES

### Effect of service quality on member loyalty.

Yudiandari, *et al* (2020) confirmed that the research results have a positive and significant effect on service quality on loyalty. The results of other studies that service quality has a positive and significant effect on member loyalty are confirmed in the research



(Megantari, *et al* 2020; Djunaedi, *et al* 2020; Iskandar, Rohman, *et al* 2020; Suwarsito, *et al* 2020; Hermawan, *et al* 2021; Annisa, *et al* 2021). Another result study (Triandewo, *et al* 2020) which examined service quality on loyalty found different results, that service quality did not affect loyalty. Referring to the results of the study, the can be formulated hypothesis following:

H1: Service quality has a positive effect on member loyalty.

### ***Effect of Service Quality on member satisfaction.***

The empirical research results of Nur Laely, *et al* (2020) confirm that the research results have a significant effect on service quality on satisfaction. The results of other similar studies from (Kartika, *et al* 2020; Yudiadari, *et al* 2020; Intan, *et al* 2021; Cynthia Fransiska, *et al* 2021; Nawang Sigit, *et al* 2017) show that service quality has a positive and significant effect on satisfaction. While the study of research results (Meli Andriyani, *et al* 2020) gave different results, service quality did not affect satisfaction. Referring to the results of the study, the can be formulated hypotheses following:

H2: Service quality has a positive effect on member satisfaction.

### ***The effect of member satisfaction on member loyalty.***

The results of empirical research by Yudiadari, *et al* (2020) in their research found that satisfaction results can affect loyalty. Other studies (Megantari, *et al* 2020; Yudiadari, *et al* 2020; Suwarsito, *et al* 2020; Alwi, *et al* 2021; Subali, *et al* 2021; Annisa, *et al* 2021; Kharisma Nawang Sigit, *et al* 2017) provide satisfactory results. affect loyalty. While Zahara's research, Rita (2020) gives different results, customer satisfaction does not affect loyalty. Most of the results of empirical studies show positive and significance. Based on this explanation, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

H3: Member satisfaction has a positive effect on member loyalty.

### ***The effect of service quality on member loyalty through member satisfaction.***

The results of the study (Yudiadari, *et al* 2020; Megantari, *et al* 2020) in their research found that satisfaction results mediate the effect of service quality on loyalty. Based on the explanation of the results of the empirical study, can be formulated the hypothesis following:

H4: Service quality has a positive effect on member loyalty through member satisfaction.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research involves three variables measured by several indicators. The study design is associative with studying the causal relationship variables of service quality variables, independent as member satisfaction and loyalty mediation member as the variable. The proposed research design is quantitative in nature with the aim of testing hypotheses based on the models and instruments that have been developed using the tool *Structural Equation Modeling* using the approach *Partial Least Square*. This research was conducted at Hiit Workout Bali, a place for Sports and Fitness Instruction with the problems encountered in building member loyalty as in common problems in the same type of business and other businesses. The research population is all members of the 155 members who were involved as a sample with the census method approach.

### ***Variables and Measures***

Research variables consist of three variables involved, namely service quality adopted from Zeithaml, VA (1990), satisfaction with indicators adopted from Li, X., and Petrick, JF (2010), and member loyalty with adopted indicators. from Pereira, et al (2016). The Measurement scale points to instrument research using a Likert scale with five (5) points, a scale of "one (1) strongly disagree" to a scale of "five (5) strongly agree". The indicators of each construct that have been tested empirically in previous studies are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test Results of Research Instruments

Variables	Items	Significant Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Quality of Service (X)	Hitt Workout Bali has comfortable equipment and buildings ( X1.1)	0.789	0.790
	Hitt Workout Bali gives personal attention to customers (X1.2)	0.865	
	Hitt Workout Bali can carry out services as promised (X1.3)	0.711	
	Hitt Workout Bali has the willingness to help customers and provide services correctly (X1.4)	0.612	
	Knowledge and courtesy of Hitt Workout Bali employees can provide trust and confidence (X1.5)	0.743	
Member Satisfaction (Y1)	I am satisfied with the Hitt Workout Bali program/service (Y1.1)	0.657	0.753
	I am very happy with the Hitt Workout Bali program/service (Y1.2)	0.780	
	I am satisfied with my decision to become a Hitt Workout Bali member (Y1.3)	0.557	
Member Loyalty (Y2)	Hitt Member communicating Bali Workout programs/services to others (Y2.1)	0.670	0.775
	Members always intend to use the program/service Hitt Workout Bali (Y2.2)	0.681	
	The price paid for the program/service Hitt Workout Bali not become a problem (Y2.3)	0.810	
	Members submit complaints that are felt as a means of improving the quality of Hitt Workout Bali (Y2.4)	0.602	

### Construct Validity and Reliability

The results of the test are validity carried out by testing the statement items used by distributing questionnaires to 30 respondents at this stage beginning. The results show the significance of positive correlation and *Cronbach Alpha* for each dimension and construct above 0.70 following the criteria stated (Ghozali, 2014). The results of *Cronbach's Alpha* for each dimension and construct shown in Table 1 show that all indicators are declared valid and the dimension is declared reliable.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The test results in this study can be obtained that the AVE value is above 0.5 (Table 2) and has met the requirements of *discriminant validity* (Ghozali, 2014). The value of the *square root of average variance extracted* ( $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ ) for each variable is mostly above the value of the correlation coefficient between variables.

**Table 2.** Values and  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  AVE

Variable	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	Correlation		
			X	Y1	Y2
Quality of Service (X)	0.558	0.747	1,000	0.852	0.827
Member Satisfaction (Y1)	0.641	0.801	0.852	1,000	0.934
Member Loyalty (Y3)	0.652	0.808	0.827	0.934	1.000

### Hypothesis Testing

Referring to Table 3 presents information on the results of research hypothesis testing. The results of the H1 test stated that the T-Statistic value was  $< 1.96$ ;  $= 0.113$  means that service quality does not affect member loyalty, thus it can be interpreted that the H1 hypothesis cannot be proven. The results of the H2 test stated that the T-Statistic value was  $> 1.96$ ;  $= 0.852$  means that service quality has a positive and significant effect on member satisfaction, which can be supported by the results of the study. The results of the H3 test stated that the T-Statistic value was  $> 1.96$ ;  $= 0.838$  means that member satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on member loyalty, which can be supported from the results of the study.

**Table 3.** Hypothesis testing results

No	Relationship between variables	Path Coefficient ( <i>Bootstrapping</i> )	T-Statistic	Information
1	Service Quality (X) -> Member Loyalty (Y1)	0.113	1.779	Not Significant
2	Service Quality (X) -> Member Satisfaction (Y2)	0.852	33.994	Significant
3	Member Satisfaction (Y1) -> Member Loyalty (Y2)	0.838	15.819	Significant

### Role of mediating

The role of mediation in this study refers to Hair *et al.*, (2010). Table 4 can provide the results of the hypothesis testing of the mediating role of member satisfaction variable (Y1) on the indirect effect of service quality variable (X) on member loyalty (Y2).

**Table 4.** Recapitulation of Test Results Mediation Variable

No	Mediation Variable	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	Information on
<b>Member Satisfaction</b>						
1	Quality of Service (X) -> Member Loyalty (Y2)	0.113 N. Sig.	0.714 Sig.	0.852 Sig.	0.838 Sig.	Fully mediated

Referring to table 4, presenting information on the results of the member satisfaction variable significantly acting as a *full mediation* from the results of the variable values (c) and (d) being significant by involving the mediation variable (a) is non-significant, thus it can be said that the variable member satisfaction can act as a full mediation (*full mediation*) in building the quality of service to member loyalty.

### DISCUSSION

Member satisfaction has been proven as mediation in building service quality on member loyalty (Table 4). Building a comfortable and safe level of service quality is one form of realizing member loyalty high during the pandemic, which is very important for the fitness center sector. The results show that indirectly the level of service quality has not been able to independently build member loyalty. Thus, there needs to be an indirect influence that needs to be built when building service quality that can increase loyalty through building customer member satisfaction. The higher the level of service quality that is built-in line with the higher the perceived satisfaction of members, the higher the level of loyalty of its members. The challenge of building a fitness center during the pandemic and the new era in the future is not only to build a level of service quality that is following service quality standards during the pandemic but how to build a fitness center so that it continues to provide comfortable service quality without any hesitation from members to create satisfaction for the community. its members which leads to high member loyalty.



The results of this study support research (Nur Laely *et al.*, 2020; Kartika Anggraeni, *et al.*, 2020; Megantari *et al.*, 2020) that service quality has a positive and significant effect on satisfaction. (Hermawan *et al.*, 2021; Iskandar, Rohman *et al.*, 2020; Zahara, Rita, 2020) supports the finding that satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on loyalty. Service quality has not been shown to have a positive and significant effect on loyalty, supported by research (Zahara, Rita, 2020)

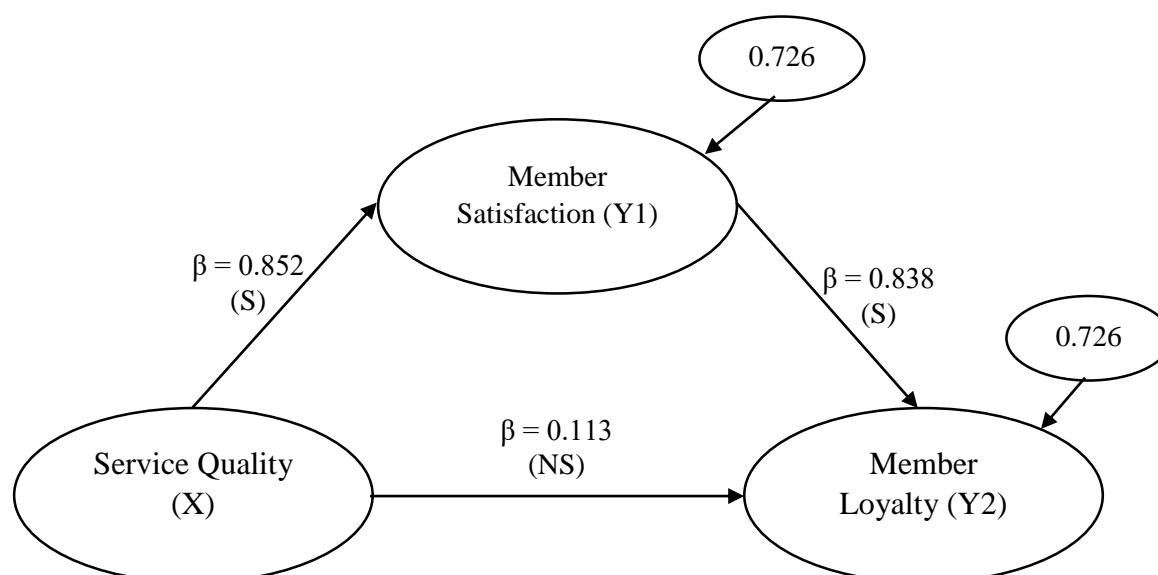


Figure 1. Theoretical Research Model

## CONCLUSIONS

### Managerial and research implications

The conclusion important from the research findings that can be drawn is that building member satisfaction can be used as a good strategy in designing quality level measures. fitness center services as a form of stimulation in building high loyalty of fitness center members. An important understanding that needs to be a reference for a fitness center is to be able to understand the expectations of its members for the quality desired. In general, it can be said that members expect quality in the form of implementation of services following what was promised to its members.

### Limitations and future lines of research

This study uses objects limited to a fitness center in the city of Denpasar. In addition to the limited object used, there are also limitations in the sample used. In future research, it is suggested to be able to study more broadly regarding the number of fitness centers and the distribution of samples used so that later they can provide a broader picture of the loyalty conditions of fitness center members throughout Bali. The tendency of member behavior that appears as a consideration in assessing the satisfaction and loyalty of various members, is recommended in the development of further research to be able to raise the level of service quality and other variables in building member loyalty.

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