

UDC 006.015.5:338.46:796

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/hst-2023-15-92-09>

THE QUALITY OF SPORTS CLUB SERVICES

MATAS, NARKEVIČIUS¹

Abstract

With high competitiveness in the sports club industry, it is necessary to claim high-quality and good services for the consumer. The quality of the services provided is recognized as an essential component in gaining a competitive advantage (Wilson et al., 2016). While maintaining the good quality of the services provided, maintaining stability and creating a mutual connection between the client and the sports club, regular and loyal customers are created. (Peitzika, Chatzi & Kissa, 2020). realizing that the quality of the services provided and the expectations set by them do not differ, they are satisfied (Preitzika, Chatzi and Kissa, 2020). In order to remain competitive, significant attempts have been made to adapt the quality of service perceived by customers (Lam et al., 2005). The problem of work is raised by the question of what is the quality of the services of a sports club and by what means to improve it. Various methods are used to assess the quality of services. Scales such as SERVQUAL and SQAS scales are often used to evaluate the services provided by sports clubs (Polyakova & Mirza, 2016). It can be assumed that sports clubs need to constantly improve the quality of their inventory and optimize the space by providing the widest possible range of sports services in order to ensure long-term income and constant growth (Sherif et al., 2022). The purpose of the work: to introduce the quality of the services of the Sports Club "Sportgates" from the point of view of customers. Tasks of the work: To discuss the factors determining the quality of services of sports clubs; describe the quality assessment models; identify the factors that determine the quality of the services of the sports club "Sportgates" and the possibilities of improvement.

Keywords: quality, sports club, sports services.

Introductions. Assessing customer satisfaction with the service provided is one of the most pressing issues for various types of organizations. This is justified by customer-oriented thinking and the basic principles of modern development. Evaluation is considered one of the five main functions of management science, which allows you to understand, analyze and improve. In recent decades, the importance of customer service in organizations has been rising. As a result, customer satisfaction assessment is considered one of the most reliable feedback, as it effectively creates a significant and objective picture that describes the client's desires and expectations. To strengthen customer orientation, more and more companies are choosing customer satisfaction as the main indicator of productivity. This decision can not motivate the employees of the entire company, since many do not work in the field of customer service. Therefore, the methods of evaluation make it possible to single out certain indicators for each area of the enterprise, which reflects their effectiveness and the benefits of work. These indicators provide motivation for employees who feel appreciated to see their achievements. In this way, the company encourages employees to strive for a higher level of productivity and allows us to see

problems. According to Silas et al. (2022) service quality has attracted academic and practitioner attention in recent decades as a result of its significant impact on company performance outcomes such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, and profitability. Typically, service quality is defined as a measurement of how well the level of given services meets the customer's expectations (Santouridia & Trivellas, 2010).

Models for assessing the quality. In the scientific literature, a number of models of quality assessment are presented: the Model of Generally Perceived Quality (Gronroos, 1990), the Service Quality Gap Model (Parasurman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985), the Servqual Service Quality Model (Parasurman, Berry and Zeithaml, 1989), the 4Q Quality Model (Gummesson, 1987), the Extended Quality Function Model (Gummesson and Ch. Gronroos, 1987), model of flawed and positive circles (Normann, 1994). According to Bagdonienė and Hopenienė (2015), the models for assessing the quality of services according to the nature of the study can be divided into groups: models of the quality of consumer perception; models of the service delivery process; models of the service delivery system.

According to Gronroos (2007), there are two types of quality of customer service: technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality is what the customer receives from the service (service), and functional quality is the way in which the service

Corresponding author:

¹ Lithuanian Sports University (Kaunas, Lithuania)
E-mail: matas.narkevicius@lsu.lt
ORCID iD: <http://orcid.org/0009-0004-6799-5425>

is provided to him (the process). One of the methods to meet the expectations of customers is the model of an ideal service or good. This is the process by which the product or service provided by the company is compared with the “ideal” – a developed theoretical model that reflects the needs of current consumers or the most popular product on the market. Companies in this way can choose a targeted plan for improving services and gain a foothold in the existing market.

The gap model (Berry, Zeithaml, Parasuraman, 1985) identifies possible shortcomings and errors at certain stages of the service and ways to eliminate those shortcomings. It also reveals which key actions related to the quality of the service belong to the provider and which to the consumer. V.A. Zeithaml and M.J. Bitner (cit. by Bagdonienė and Hopenienė, 2015) presented measures to avoid specific quality gaps (table 1).

Another method widely used in enterprises is SERVQUAL. This model can be considered an extension of the ideal method, which includes data from various studies and surveys into evaluation indicators. Several technologies have been created with the goal of capturing and elucidating the service quality characteristics. SERVQUAL was created in stages, with each stage leading to a more sophisticated version. In the most generally used

form (Parasuraman et al., 1988), service quality is defined as the gap between customer expectations and perceptions, and it is described by five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy (Silas, Dung and Bagobiri, 2022). Using SERVQUAL, it is possible to explore the gap between expectations and perception to help managers set goals and priorities for improvement in order to achieve the best results (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1986), Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml and Berry (1988), Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml and Berry (1991). Several studies have been carried out to identify the elements of service quality. According to Sasser et al. (1978), service quality comprises of three dimensions: physical facilities, materials and staff. Meanwhile, service quality has two aspects: technical quality and functional quality (Gronroos, 1984).

In the literature analyzing the quality of services, most often attempts are made to divide the factors influencing the approach to services, to various levels. The highest level is assigned several aspects of the quality of service. They can be decomposed into a wider set of service quality factors, which are then developed into questions formulated for evaluation purposes, forming a systematized survey. The initial concept of the SERVQUAL tool defined 10 factors determining the quality of services.

Table 1

Measures to address quality gaps

Quality gap	Measures to eliminate quality gaps
Gap 1 – Mismatch between consumer expectations and the provider’s ability to perceive them	1. Improving communication between managers and contact staff. 2. Direct communication of managers with consumers. 3. Listening and explaining to consumers: (what consumers expect from the service); (what are their goals and needs).
Gap 2 – non-compliance with the service provider’s perceived consumer expectations and quality standards	1. Development of competence of managers and employees. 2. Performance standards that reflect consumers expectations, setting. 3. Keeping promises. 4. Development of a positive attitude towards the consumer. 5. Additional encouragement of employees to seek Quality
Gap 3 – Deviation of the provision of the service from the established standards	1. Compliance with established standards. 2. Creation of appropriate technical conditions. 3. The hiring of competent personnel. 4. Staff training. 5. Promotion of teamwork. 6. Intolerance of competition between workers.
Gap 4 – Mismatch between the provision of the service and marketing communications	1. Improvement of internal and external communication. 2. Diversification of information sources. 3. Consumer training and education. 4. Moderate promises and their observance.
Gap 5 – Mismatch between consumers and expectations of the service actually received	The service must meet the expectations of the user, so all the above tools are suitable.

In the SERVQUAL methodology, five potential differences that arise in the process of providing the service are distinguished.

1. The difference between the expectations of the client and the flair of managers, what the client wants.

2. The difference between the flair of managers and the specification of a quality service.

3. The difference between the specification of a quality service and the provision of the service.

4. The difference between the provision of the service and external cooperation with customers about the provision of the service.

5. The difference between the expectations of the client and their perception of the quality of the service received.

Points 1–4 are the responsibility of the company, they show the quality of the service provision. The fifth difference depends only on the client, and therefore remains as the main evaluation criterion. The main method to eliminate the difference of 5 is to fill 1–4. In the original, the authors identified 10 different aspects of measuring the quality of customer service, grouped by results after various tests into five categories: material (measurable) elements, longevity, responsibility, reliability, empathy. (Al-Gasawneh et al., 2021). These five dimensions are thus assessed by a total of 44 items in which 22 items to measure the general expectations of customers concerning a service, measures the perceptions of customers regarding the levels of service actually provided by the company within that service category (Ladhari, 2009; Hue Minh et al., 2015). For each aspect of SERVQUAL formulated questions, which define expectations from the desired service and the perception of what result the client wants from the received service. Depending on the type of service being evaluated and the experience of the assessors in the service covered area, the questions may have different weights. Because of the importance of the hospitality sector to every country across the world, and because this sector has the potential to increase enormous income earners in the service industry, there has been a surge in interest in conceptualizing and managing service quality in recent years (Silas, Dung and Bagobiri, 2022).

Results

After visiting the sports club “Sportgates”, customers noted the best qualities of staff with courtesy and ensuring consistency of service. As well as the amount of knowledge available to employees, assistance, prompt maintenance and training, in order to always come to the rescue

in case of difficulties. Customers are satisfied with the staff of the sports club, more loyal, and a good reputation directly affects the perceived quality of service (Gu, 2022). The livability and dressing of the staff is the biggest difference between the expected quality and quality of experience. Staff clothing has been identified as one of the main dimensions of service quality (Aftnanorhan et al., 2019). Although there is no significant difference between expectations and quality, when the client requires the employee to have sufficient knowledge to answer customer questions, but possession of the necessary knowledge / skills does not meet the expectations of the raised customers. This could happen because employees’ communication skills are not good and this can lead to misunderstandings between the client and staff, although the staff is knowledgeable and able to answer the questions posed. By improving the communication skills of gym staff, a company can increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, so in the long run the business will be more successful (Alexandris et al., 2004).

Possession of the necessary knowledge and skills is very important for the provision of quality services, but it is often underestimated simply to pay additional attention to the client. Respondents’ expectations were exceeded by only a few criteria. One of their instructors is to give personalized attention. The instructor’s extra attention to the client can get good feedback, while the client has better outcomes, reduces the risk of injury, and increases motivation (McClaran, 2003). Another criterion that exceeded respondents’ expectations was the “response to complaints”, the good work of the staff, reflecting the quality of services offered by the sports club (Polyakova & Ramchandani, 2020).

Summing up, it can be said that quality is formed by the consumer and the service provider, and the resulting various gaps in the process of providing services can affect the consumer’s perception of the quality of the service. The quality of customer service is characterized as the ratio of customer expectations to the services provided by the company. The result of satisfaction comes from a comparison between real experience in using the service and a specific standard of customer comparison. level of fulfillment of the client’s wishes corresponds to the level of customer satisfaction of the client. Organizations, applying a quality customer service mechanism, meet the expectations of the customer, thereby attracting a larger number of customers, developing loyalty and can become

economically competitive in their field of activity. The scientific literature presents such models for assessing the quality of service, such as a model of generally perceived quality, a model of gaps in the quality of service. SERVQUAL service quality model, 4Q quality model, extended quality function model, flawed and positive wheel model. Models for assessing the quality of service are divided into

groups according to the nature of the study: models of the quality of consumer perception; models for the process of providing the service; models of the service delivery system. One of the most popular and widely used models of customer service quality assessments is the SERVQUAL service quality model, which is used to determine the quality of service when serving customers in various sectors.

References

- Al-Gasawneh, J.A., Anuar, M.M., Dacko-Pikiewicz, Z., Saputra, J. (2021). The Impact Of Customer Relationship Management Dimensions On Service. *Quality Polish Journal Of Management Studies*. Vol. 23. № 2. P. 24–41.
- Bagdonienė, L. ir Hopenienė R. (2009) *Paslaugų marketingas ir vadyba*. Kaunas: Technologija. P. 468.
- Gronroos, C. (1984). A service quality model and its marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing*. Vol. 18 (4). P. 36–44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EUM000000004784>
- Hue Minh, N., Thu Ha, N., Chi Anh, P. & Matsui, Y. (2015). Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: A Case Study of Hotel Industry in Vietnam. *Asian Social Science*. Vol. 11. № 10. P. 73–85.
- Ladhari, R. (2009a). A review of twenty years of SERVQUAL research. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*. № 1 (2). P. 172–198. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17566690910971445>
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, L.L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implication, *Journal of Marketing*. Vol. 49. Fall. P. 41–50.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, L.L. (1986). SERVQUAL: a multiple-item scale for measuring customer perceptions of service quality. *Report*. № 86–108. Marketing Science Institute, Cambridge, MA.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L.L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*. P. 12–40.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, L.L. (1991). Refinement and reassessment of the SERVQUAL scale. *Journal of Retailing*. Vol. 67. P. 420–450.
- Santouridis, I., & Travellas, P. (2010). Investigating the impact of service quality and customer satisfaction on loyalty in mobile telephone in Greece. *The TQM Journal*. Vol. 2 (3). P. 330–343.
- Silas, G., Dung, G.P. and Bagobiri, E. (2022). Service Quality and Customer Loyalty: The Mediating Effect of Customer Brand Identification in the Nigerian Hospitality Industry. *International Journal of Marketing & Human Resource Research*. Vol. 3. No. 1.

МАТАС, НАРКЯВІЧІУС – магістр,
Департамент менеджменту спорту і туризму,
Литовський університет спорту (Каунас, Литва)
E-mail: matas.narkevicius@lsu.lt
ODCID iD: 0009-0004-6799-5425

ЯКІСТЬ ПОСЛУГ СПОРТИВНОГО КЛУБУ

Анотація

При високій конкурентоспроможності в індустрії спортивних клубів необхідно претендувати на якісні та хороші послуги для споживача. Якість послуг, що надаються, визнається найважливішим компонентом отримання конкурентних переваг (Wilson et al., 2016). При збереженні хорошої якості послуг, що надаються, збереженні стабільності і створенні взаємного зв'язку між клієнтом і спортивним клубом створюються постійні і лояльні клієнти. (Пейцика, Чатці і Кісса, 2020). розуміючи, що якість послуг, що надаються, і поставлені ними очікування не відрізняються, вони задоволені (Preitzika, Chatzi and Kissa, 2020). Для того, щоб залишатися конкурентоспроможними, були зроблені значні спроби адаптувати якість обслуговування, що сприймається клієнтами (Lam et al., 2005). Проблему роботи піднімає питання про те, що таке якість послуг спортивного клубу і якими засобами його поліпшити. Для оцінки якості послуг використовуються різні методи. Такі шкали, як шкали SERVQUAL і SQAS, часто використовуються для оцінки послуг, що надаються спортивними клубами (Polyakova & Mirza, 2016). Можна припустити, що спортивним клубам необхідно постійно покращувати якість свого інвентарю та оптимізувати простір, надаючи максимально широкий спектр спортивних послуг, щоб забезпечити довгостроковий дохід і постійне зростання (Sherif et al., 2022). Мета роботи: познайомити з якістю послуг спортивного клубу «Спортгейтс» з точки зору клієнтів. Завдання роботи: Обговорити фактори, що визначають якість послуг

спортивних клубів; описати моделі оцінки якості; виявити фактори, що визначають якість послуг спортивного клубу «Спортгейтс» і можливості вдосконалення.

Ключові слова: якість, спортивний клуб, спортивні послуги.

© The Author(s) 2023

This is an open access article under
the Creative Commons CC BY license

Received date 18.04.2023

Accepted date 01.05.2023

Published date 18.05.2023

How to cite: Narkevičius, Matas. The quality of sports club services. Humanities studies : Collection of Scientific Papers / Ed. V. Voronkova. Zaporizhzhia : Publishing house “Helvetica”, 2023. 15 (92). P. 79–83.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.32782/hst-2023-15-92-09>