

**The impact of fitness instructor quality on customer
satisfaction in fitness centres**

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1. INTRODUCTION

A business that seeks success needs to focus on satisfying its customers, exceeding their expectations, to retain them. Therefore, retention is one of the key words for the success of fitness centres, and is considered one of the main problems for managers in this industry (Ferreira-Barbosa et al., 2022). The concept of retention in fitness centres refers to customer retention and is considered key to their success (Ferrand et al., 2010). Customer satisfaction is known to be one of the most influential variables on customer retention (Rahmatulloh & Melinda, 2021). Customer satisfaction is defined as the degree to which a product's performance meets or exceeds customer expectations (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012).

Positive customer impressions of service quality, according to Ferreira-Barbosa et al. (2022), influence customer satisfaction, which in turn affects customer retention, and are essential to the long-term viability of fitness centres. The quality of the instructors is one of the aspects of service quality in a fitness centres that has the greatest impact on customer satisfaction, according to the same authors' study. Because customer satisfaction and retention are so important for the sustainability of a fitness centres, and satisfaction is dependent on the quality of the instructor, it is critical that there is a genuine focus on these themes. Customers consider the instructor's behaviour and attitude when judging the quality of service received because he or she is a direct participant in service delivery. In this sense, the study of instructor quality in group fitness classes is critical as a variable to measure service quality to improve customer satisfaction and subsequent retention. In view of the above, the objective of this study is to investigate the influence of group class instructor quality on customer satisfaction in fitness centres.

2. METHOD

The sample consisted of 109 customers from several fitness centres. Data was collected between December 2022 and February 2023. The questionnaire used (Campos et al., 2016) is comprised with 25 questions and assesses two dimensions: the instructor's technical-pedagogical quality (14 items) and the instructor's relational quality (11 items). Four items were also added to this questionnaire to measure customers' overall satisfaction with the fitness centre (García-Fernández et al., 2018).

In this study, chi-square tests were performed as well as a binary logistic regression analysis.

3. RESULTS

Customers are completely satisfied with the fitness centre. Among the participants, women (62.3%), customers over 40 years old (61.7%), obese (66.1%), and customers registered for less than two years (62.2%) reported total satisfied with the fitness centre. The total satisfaction with the service was significantly correlated with relational dimension of fitness instructor (78.3%; $p < 0.001$) and technical-pedagogical dimension of fitness instructor (84%; $p = 0.001$). Participants who reported total quality in the relational dimension (OR=5.69, 95% CI: 1.27-25.47, $p=0.023$) and in the technical-pedagogical dimension (OR=5.05, 95% CI: 1.34-18.96, $p=0.016$) are both positively linked with total customer satisfaction. With the increasing of quality dimension (relational and technical-pedagogical) also increase the odds of customers being totally satisfied with the service. The model explains around 46% (Nagelkerke =0.455) of the variation in customer satisfaction. The model with the various predictor variables predicts customer satisfaction statistically significantly ($\chi^2(6) = 31,793$, $p < 0,001$).

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings, both the relational and technical-pedagogical components are favourably related to customer satisfaction. Which means that the customers who are most satisfied with the quality of the instructor, in terms of professional skills, interpersonal skills, technical specificity skills, and pedagogical aspects are those who are most satisfied with the fitness centre service. According to Xu et al. (2021), instructor quality and performance are predictive of customer satisfaction, and their significance and importance have been proven and reaffirmed in this study. Other investigations support the findings of this study by emphasizing the importance of the instructor's role such as their training, qualifications, and professional experience (Ortega Martínez et al., 2021), or their performance in group classes, as well as their attitude and relational qualities (Freitas & Lacerda, 2019) in customer satisfaction.

The findings of this study are significant for fitness centre managers and technical directors because it allows them to consider the instructor's quality indicators when hiring new professionals to work in the fitness centre, allowing them to supervise the

instructor's performance and behaviour while taking quality dimensions into account, to boost their institutions' earnings by increasing retention rates.

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