

**32 - CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND THE FIDELIZATION PROCESS IN A FITNESS ORGANIZATION**

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doi:10.16887/88.a1.32

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Important information on the Brazilian fitness market is contained in the Global Report IHRSA 2017, which presents details on four macro-regions: Americas, Europe, Middle East and North Africa and Asia-Pacific. In the document, there is information on the global growth of the fitness industry, as the record for practitioners since when the organization began data collection of this nature in 1987: more than 162 million people handled the staggering US\$ 83.1 billion.

Although Brazil ranks among the ten largest fitness markets in the world, with 34.509 academies (2nd place) and 9.6 million clients (4th place), which generated a gross revenue of US\$ 2.1 billion (10th place) there is concern about possible impacts caused by the country's economic situation. In comparison with the results of the IHRSA 2016 Global Report, there is the Brazil's growth in number of academies (31.809) and number of clients (7.9 million), but a decrease in revenue (US\$ 2.4 billion).

For Munaier (2017, p. 01), despite "a severe economic and political crisis, the market continued its hyperplasia (because there was an increase in the number of 'cells') and hypertrophy (since there was an increase in the number of clients per gym). Today, there are more people practicing physical activity in an oriented way in our companies and, for the first time, we overcome the barrier of the 4% of the Brazilian population using the services.

According to Borges (2017, p. 13), "economically, the results of Brazilian academies have not been good. The number of gyms and clients has grown, but it is still very difficult for Brazilian companies to earn money." Currently, he is the president of the Brazilian Association of Academies (BAA) and considers that the decrease in revenue is related to "the fall of the average ticket, due to several factors, among them the crisis, the exchange and the invasion of the low cost / low price model".

For Munaier (2017, p. 02), there is a need to watch for the fall in the financial movement since, annually, the average monthly payment paid by the Brazilian client has decreased, as a probable reflection of the strong performance of the low-priced gyms. And he warns about the need for disciplined financial management, so that the academy is also "healthy" in this regard.

From the marketing point of view, which includes the provision of health programs against obesity, activities for the elderly, products related to healthy eating and incentive to improve sports performance, among others, the behavior change represents an opportunity of work for countless health professionals, whether teachers, nutritionists, endocrinologists, personal trainers or coaches, as well as increasing revenue for dance schools, martial art schools and other sectors related to sports and physical activity.

In general, there is a climate of euphoria with the growth of the Brazilian market, despite the adverse scenario of the economic crisis. In this sense, through an exploratory study, we sought the identification of factors that interfere in the level of satisfaction of these consumers and imply in the evasion in a short time, intervening in the process of loyalty.

**2. THEORETICAL REFERENCE**

Not always managers of academies and sport centers have good knowledge of their business. Many times the function is exercised by physical education teachers without administrative experience, who learn in practice and in race, argues Saba (2006, p. 67).

The fitness market is an economic sector that has grown a lot in recent decades and this activity requires the typical treatment of any economic good. A millionaire business able to seduce investors of the most diverse profiles, with multiple possibilities of generation of direct and indirect jobs.

Brazil has many graduation courses in Physical Education, says Saba (2006, p. 113), but still suffers from the lack of good educators. For him, faculties need to create a differentiated systematic to implant entrepreneurship from the first year and to balance the position of the technician professional with the humanist line.

According to Pereira (2009, p. 35), the academy business is becoming increasingly professional and many managers of these places have already realized that "to remain in this market, they should always be aware of sources of revenue and optimization of costs and that reducing prices may have the effect of reducing the profitability of their business."

Poor management can pose a risk to a company. Bertão (2016, p. 03) states that "before venturing into the fitness world, a complete strategic plan must be made. According to Sebrae, 24% of Brazilian companies close their doors in the first two years."

Along the same lines, Santana (2012, p. 177) indicates that, "administrative and business management practices require managers / professionals with a not only technical and specific qualification in the field of physical education, but other skills that are found in business schools and administration. " For him, the need for reliable information and data is an important step for the academies, but many other information must be collected and generated for strengthening and making strategic decisions that help the productive chain involved in this market: owners, suppliers, vendors, employees, teachers and clients.

The low qualification of the managers is one of the biggest problems of the academies. Lima and Andrade (2003, p. 02), consider that academies are present in social life, many of them in the form of micro or small companies, associating health, well-being and modism in the same environment and, therefore, related to their form of management are desirable, considering that it is a type of business in expansion ".

In the current scenario of economic difficulties, and also of marked competition, the fidelization theme causes great concern to the managers of the academy, since it is the key to the prolonged stay of clients, besides that this market has an aggravating characteristic, with high rate of turnover, that is, a high level of avoidance after enrollment.

This concern has its logic, because according to Viñaspre (2012, p. 168), "fitness has very high rates of customer turnover if we compare it with other sectors. There is no study at the national level that reliably indicates the average rotation rate of the sector. " But, for him, recently collected data indicate average rates close to 70% per year. While this is not good, it is not a fitness exclusivity, as similar rates are found in weight loss diets and smoking cessation programs.

In addressing the theme fidelization, Santos (2008, p. 01) points out how important it is to consider aspects related not

only to the client, but also to the employee and the investor, who are closely intertwined and "so that loyalty-based management fruits, it is necessary to consider all parts. People are above processes: the goal of a business is to create value, not just products / services."

No company can meet all the needs of all consumers. Therefore, Santos (2008, p.22) emphasizes that it is necessary to concentrate on certain clients and to do everything possible to preserve them, elaborating pricing policies, product lines and service levels aimed at increasing their loyalty.

The academy leaders present different positions regarding competition. For Lima and Andrade (2003, p. 06), the leaders of the academies present different positions regarding competition. "The concern with the competition occurs to the extent that the directors of the academies want to know what is being done by the other academies, in relation to the services and prices practiced. On the other hand, there are entrepreneurs who are concerned only with the company itself, disregarding the presence of others."

According to Lubisco (2010, p. 13), the business world reveals facets that when applied to people's quality of life usually bring profound changes of perspective. Moving the management tools from the marketing and business areas to the day-to-day is at least a revealing way.

### 3.METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as a qualitative-quantitative, descriptive, exploratory research and obtained the information of the participants through a field survey using questionnaires. In the initial part, the instrument elaborated for data collection raised general information about the client profile, which were not used in this study. Next, there were seven (7) closed questions regarding the level of satisfaction of the participants, addressing structural aspects, each with several items referring to the services offered regularly. At the end of the questionnaire was the option for a General Evaluation of the Level of Satisfaction.

After the preparation of a preliminary version of the instrument, we applied the same to three clients, for adjustments of interpretations that made difficult the subsequent analysis of the data. Next, we held a meeting with the monitors, who collaborated in the application of the instruments, justifying the importance of the study for the company with the results obtained on the perception of the clients.

The analysis and interpretation of the data were simplified by the reduction of variability, with the use of questions with fixed answers. Of easy application, the objective answers were limited to the alternatives: Excellent (Completely Satisfied), Good (Partially Satisfied), Regular (Partially Dissatisfied) and Evil (Totally Dissatisfied).

In the analysis of the results, we used the descriptive statistics, to have a global view of variation of the values, organizing and describing the data through tables and graphs generated by the program Microsoft Excel, for the analysis of interpretative form through percentages, identifying and analyzing the most cited reasons as potential reasons for customer avoidance, and relating to theoretical references.

The sample was characterized as being non-probabilistic for convenience, with the clients who were available to answer the questions, constituted by 210 (two hundred and ten) questionnaires applied to randomly chosen persons, among the attendants of the three working shifts, who were shown available to answer the questions.

The structuring aspects researched are indicated, below, with the relation of the evaluated items in each of them:

- i) Reception Attendance: waiting time, mastery of information, clarification of doubts, resolution of problems, attention in the reception, motivation for work, cordiality and friendliness;
- ii) Teachers: initial care, attention to postures and executions, incentive to achieve goals, response to their needs, follow-up of evolution, motivation for work, cordiality and empathy;
- iii) Facilities and physical structure: hygiene and cleaning of changing rooms, swimming pool and other environments, use of individual cabinets, water temperature, sound quality, musical programming and room ventilation;
- iv) Equipment: hygiene and cleaning, maintenance and conservation, organization in the places of activities and quantity of support material;
- v) The physical evaluation of the procedures, motivation for work, warmth and sympathy;
- vi) Management and Services: diversity of modalities, scheduling and price / quality ratio;
- vii) The Other Aspects: the location, conditions of access, diversity of schedules, possibility of parking, fulfillment of the objectives, attendance of expectations and price of the monthly payments.

Next, the analyzes resulting from the upward information.

### 4.ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

For the analysis and interpretation of the data, in the statistical upward of each structuring aspect, we verified the average of the values obtained in the respective items, emphasizing those of better performance (Excellent and Good) and those that leave to be desired (Regular and Bad). Based on this, we began the analyzes.

Regarding Reception Attention we identified total satisfaction in 48% of clients, 42% partially satisfied, 7%, partially dissatisfied and 3% totally dissatisfied. The best evaluated item was the Warmth and Sympathy (58%), followed by Daily Attention Reception (52%), while Problem Solving (43%) lacks in desire.

Customer service is not restricted to the time of arrival at the reception. Saba (2006: p. 49) considers that teachers, cleaners or valets, in short, are all responsible for the care. He also considers that dealing with management implies talking about power, deadlines, actions, spaces, services and, above all, people because "the profitability of the business depends on people. Employees and teachers need to know the client's goals and commit to serving him well in order to stimulate his return."

According to Barbosa and Derzi (2011, p.140), the basis of good service is on an elementary issue: are you attending how you would like to be served? And it underscores the importance of making clear the difference between a receptionist and a "deceptionist."

As for Teachers, 55% are totally satisfied, 36% partially satisfied, 7% partially dissatisfied and 2% totally dissatisfied. The best evaluated item was the Warmth and Sympathy (66%), followed by Initial Attendance, while Evolution Monitoring (49%) and Attention to Positions and Executions (50%) left something to be desired.

Currently, for Pereira (2009, p.35), "a customer is played by at least ten academies in the same field. The demand for customers is greater, but increased the options of academies that offer the same services. This means that for each academy alone demand has declined." In this environment of fierce competition, it is essential to meet, or even extrapolate, the customers' expectations for the long term relationship. And the attention dedicated by teachers can not be restricted to good relationship, but also focus on achieving positive performance.

Regarding Facilities and Infrastructure, 23% of customers are totally satisfied, 48% partially satisfied, 22% partially dissatisfied and 7% totally dissatisfied. The best item evaluated was Pool Water Temperature (31%), while Music Programming

(23%) and Toiletries Cleaning (24%) left out to be desired, but Room Ventilation (12%) was the item with worse evaluation. In these structuring aspects there is a need for greater attention and verification of the possibilities of being feasible new alternatives to meet the expectations of the clients, considering the economic conditions of the enterprise.

The expectations of a potential client when they enter a gym are higher each day. According to Viñaspre (2012, p. 40), "changing rooms are an area of particular importance, both in terms of cleanliness and comfort. If a facility has a small area, you should strike a balance between the amount of services it offers and comfort."

When questioned about the Equipment: 20% are totally satisfied, 53% partially satisfied, 23% partially dissatisfied and 4% totally dissatisfied. The best evaluated item was the Quantity (26%), while Maintenance and Conservation (13%), followed by Hygiene and Cleaning (17%) left something to be desired.

According to Saba (2006, p. 103), all employees are responsible for cleanliness that should merit only one adjective: flawless. In order to guarantee this level, it is necessary for the manager to monitor this closely and personally charge the managers.

When commenting on Physical Evaluation, 42% are totally satisfied, 52% partially satisfied, 6% partially dissatisfied and 0% totally dissatisfied. The best evaluated item was the Warmth and Sympathy (50%), while the Domain of Procedures (38%) left something to be desired.

For Camargo (2016), physical evaluation is an important tool for positioning a gym in front of its clients. Increasingly, students seek services and experiences that fit their needs, not just a structure. It ensures that no student will complain about going through a process that will help you achieve your goals.

When they spoke about Management and Services, 35% were totally satisfied, 55% partially satisfied, 8% partially dissatisfied and 2% totally dissatisfied. The best evaluated item was the Modalities Schedule Offer (38%), while Modality Diversity (34%) left something.

In Other Aspects, 40% are totally satisfied, 47% partially satisfied, 10% partially dissatisfied and 3% totally dissatisfied. The best evaluated item was the location (57%), followed by the Access Conditions (50%). However, the Parking Possibilities (15%) and the Achievement of Objectives have left nothing to be desired. There is always the challenge of space for parking in capitals. The main factor for clients' choice of a gym remains proximity to their home, says Viñaspre (2012, page 39). For him "accessibility is another aspect to take into consideration. Depending on the population in which we are inserted, there may be different habits as regards the form of displacement."

And, in the General Evaluation, we realized that 37% are totally satisfied, 48% partially satisfied, 12% partially dissatisfied and 3% totally dissatisfied. Keeping a customer requires less financial resources than winning a new customer, Caldeira (2006, p. 182) states, and raising customer retention rates is of utmost importance to economic success.

The importance of having a good evaluation and maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction is highlighted by Viñaspre (2012, p. 179), because "it is considered that in service companies as: only one in 27 clients complains, at least that each one we receive must be multiplied by 27, because, surely, they are customers who have the same complaint and did not communicate it." In view of the above, the monitoring of the services offered, through satisfaction survey, becomes essential, in order to obtain the real dimension of the customer's expectation, in relation to the attendance by the company.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The measurement of a client's level of satisfaction is very complex, subjective, considering that it is related to their state of mind, and the attention of the company to the expectations of the clients in relation to the services rendered is fundamental to guarantee personal satisfaction and the loyalty.

The most diverse business areas have devoted a lot of attention to customer retention issues. In this study, aimed at the external client of the Academy, object of the research, an essential question is as to the direction of the priority: to look for new clients or to maintain existing clients. Judging by the experience and the cost-benefit ratio, the continuity of a customer in the company requires less investment than necessary to captivate a new client. Therefore, loyalty must be the focus.

From the information obtained through the evaluation of the level of customer satisfaction, it was concluded that the technical competence of the teachers and the quality of the service rendered by them are decisive, given the direct relationship they have with the clients.

But some points deserve special attention, as they indicate customer dissatisfactions, such as: the issues related to the difficulty of parking and mainly, greater monitoring of activities to achieve objectives and expectations. At the same time, there is a need to diversify the set of modalities offered, motivating a significant portion of the public consulted, minimizing the possibility of routine.

The attention of the company to the expectations of the clients in relation to the services provided is fundamental to guarantee personal satisfaction and, consequently, loyalty. A successful strategy should balance elements such as those pointed out in this study, associated with a permanent search for financial results, to enable the survival of the enterprise.

The manager of an Academy must pay special attention to updating the company's marketing plan. It enables the adjustment of established strategies initially and the establishment of new goals. Although it looks formal, the business plan can and should be flexible, in addition to periodically updated.

Complementary surveys should be carried out to monitor customer satisfaction. In this sense, based on the changes that will be introduced based on the conclusions of this study, the manager must seek the permanent improvement and qualification of the services offered to his public, always remembering that his business is the commerce of well-being and quality of life.

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#### CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND THE FIDELIZATION PROCESS IN A FITNESS ORGANIZATION

Brazil is among the ten largest fitness markets in the world, however, there is a concern about the possible impacts caused by the current economic situation of the country. This study aimed to analyze the level of customer satisfaction of a fitness organization as an important element in the process of loyalty and identification of factors that interfere in the level of satisfaction of these consumers and that imply in evasion in a short period of time. The research is characterized as qualitative-quantitative, of an exploratory nature, and was performed at a gymnasium in Belém, using questionnaires that were answered by 210 (two hundred and ten) randomly chosen clients, among those attending the three working shifts. With the results obtained it is possible to emphasize that the clients are totally satisfied with the attendance offered at the reception, with the teachers, with the facilities and the physical evaluations; partially satisfied with the management and services aspects; and dissatisfied with the difficulty of parking, with ventilation and cleaning of environments. It was concluded that the technical competence of the teachers and the quality of the care provided by them are decisive, given the direct relationship they have with the clients. In the same direction, the attention of the company to the expectations of the clients in relation to the provided services is fundamental to guarantee personal satisfaction and loyalty.

Keywords: Satisfaction, loyalty, market.

#### SATISFACTION DU CLIENT ET PROCESSUS DE FIDELISATION DANS UNE ORGANISATION DE FITNESS

Le Brésil est l'un des dix plus grands marchés du fitness au monde, mais on s'inquiète des impacts possibles de la situation économique actuelle du pays. Cette étude visait à analyser le niveau de satisfaction de la clientèle d'une organisation de fitness comme un élément important dans le processus de fidélisation et l'identification des facteurs qui interfèrent dans le niveau de satisfaction de ces consommateurs et qui impliquent en évasion dans un court laps de temps. La recherche est qualifiée de qualitative-quantitative, de nature exploratoire, et a été réalisée dans un gymnase à Belém, en utilisant des questionnaires qui ont été répondus par 210 (deux cent dix) clients choisis au hasard, parmi les participants aux trois quarts de travail. Avec les résultats obtenus, il est possible de souligner que les clients sont totalement satisfaits de la présence offerte à la réception, avec les enseignants, avec les installations et les évaluations physiques; partiellement satisfait des aspects de gestion et de service; et insatisfait de la difficulté de stationnement, avec des environnements de ventilation et de nettoyage. Il a été conclu que la compétence technique des enseignants et la qualité des soins qu'ils dispensent sont déterminantes, compte tenu de la relation directe qu'ils entretiennent avec les clients. Dans le même sens, l'attention de l'entreprise aux attentes des clients par rapport aux services fournis est fondamentale pour garantir la satisfaction personnelle et la fidélité.

Mots-clés: Satisfaction, fidélisation, marché.

#### LA SATISFACCIÓN DE CLIENTES Y EL PROCEDIMIENTO DE FIDELIZACIÓN EN UNA ORGANIZACIÓN DEL FITNESS

Brasil figura entre los diez mayores mercados de fitness en el mundo, pero hay una preocupación por los posibles impactos provocados por la actual situación económica del país. Este estudio buscó analizar el nivel de satisfacción de los clientes de una organización del fitness, como elemento importante en el proceso para la fidelización y la identificación de factores que interfieren en el nivel de satisfacción de estos consumidores y que implican la evasión en reducido espacio de tiempo. La investigación se caracteriza como cuantitativa, de cuño exploratorio, y fue realizada en una academia de Belém, utilizando cuestionarios que fueron respondidos por 210 (doscientos y diez) clientes escogidos aleatoriamente, entre los frequentadores de los tres turnos de funcionamiento. Con los resultados obtenidos se puede destacar que los clientes están totalmente satisfechos con la atención ofrecida en la recepción, con los profesores, con las instalaciones y las evaluaciones físicas; parcialmente satisfechos en cuanto a los aspectos de gestión y servicios; e insatisfechos con la dificultad para el estacionamiento, con la ventilación y la limpieza de ambientes. Se concluyó así que la competencia técnica de los profesores y la calidad de la atención prestada por ellos son decisivas, visto la relación directa que poseen con los clientes. En la misma dirección, la atención de la empresa con las expectativas de los clientes en relación a los servicios prestados es fundamental para garantizar la satisfacción personal y la fidelización.

Palabras clave: Satisfacción, fidelización, mercado

#### A SATISFAÇÃO DE CLIENTES E O PROCESSO DE FIDELIZAÇÃO EM UMA ORGANIZAÇÃO DO FITNESS

O Brasil figura entre os dez maiores mercados de fitness no mundo, porém, há uma preocupação com os possíveis impactos provocados pela atual situação econômica do país. O presente trabalho buscou analisar o nível de satisfação dos clientes de uma organização do fitness, como elemento importante no processo para a fidelização e a identificação de fatores que interferem no nível de satisfação destes consumidores e que implicam na evasão em reduzido espaço de tempo. A pesquisa caracteriza-se como quali-quantitativa, de cunho exploratório, e foi realizada em uma academia de Belém, utilizando-se de questionários que foram respondidos por 210 (duzentos e dez) clientes escolhidos aleatoriamente, entre os frequentadores dos três turnos de funcionamento. Com os resultados obtidos pode-se destacar que os clientes estão totalmente satisfeitos com o atendimento oferecido na recepção, com os professores, com as instalações e as avaliações físicas; parcialmente satisfeitos quanto aos aspectos de gestão e serviços; e insatisfeitos com a dificuldade para estacionamento, com a ventilação e a limpeza

de ambientes. Concluiu-se assim que a competência técnica dos professores e a qualidade do atendimento prestado por eles são decisivas, visto a relação direta que possuem com os clientes. Na mesma direção, a atenção da empresa com as expectativas dos clientes em relação aos serviços prestados é fundamental para garantir a satisfação pessoal e a fidelização.

Palavras-chave: Satisfação, fidelização, mercado.

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