MEMBERS' SATISFACTION OF FITNESS SERVICE QUALITY: A CASE STUDY OF CALIFORNIA WOW XPERIENCE PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED

A MASTER'S PROJECT

BY

PAIROT RUEANGTHANAKIET

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication

at Srinakharinwirot University

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AN ABSTRACT

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Pairot Rueangthanakiet. (2008). *Members' Satisfaction of Fitness Service Quality: A Case Study of California Wow Xperience*. Master's Project M.A. (Business English for International Communication). Bangkok: Graduate School Srinakharinwirot University.

Project Advisor: Dr. U-maporn Kardkarnklai.

This study explored members' satisfaction of service quality in fitness business and examined the relationship between demographic profile and members' satisfaction. The data was derived from questionnaires, applying the SERVQUAL instrument, distributed to 40 members of California Wow Xperience from 4 main clubs in Bangkok. The results showed members' satisfaction in five dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) which were at the average level. Moreover, the highest satisfaction level was placed on the 'assurance' dimension, followed by 'tangibles', 'empathy', 'reliability', and 'responsiveness' respectively.

The demographic profile was related to members' satisfaction. Among the five dimensions, male members were more satisfied than female members. Members aged above 40 years old were more satisfied than those aged 20 – 30 and 31 – 40 years old. Members with a Bachelor's degree or higher were most satisfied with 'tangibles', 'responsiveness', 'assurance' and 'empathy' dimensions, while those with educational level lower than a Bachelor's degrees were more satisfied with the 'reliability' dimension. Members earning more than 15,000 baht per month; rated higher satisfaction on the 'tangibles', 'reliability', 'responsiveness', and 'empathy' dimensions, whereas members earning less than 15,000 baht were more satisfied with the 'assurance' dimension.

ความพึงพอใจของสมาชิกที่มีต่อคุณภาพบริการด้านการออกกำลังกาย กรณีศึกษาของบริษัทแคลิฟอร์เนีย ว้าว เอ็กซ์พีเรียนซ์ จำกัด (มหาชน)

บทคัดย่อ

ของ

ไพโรจน์ เรื่องธนเกียรติ

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ

ตุลาคม 2551

ไพโรจน์ เรื่องธนเกียรติ. (2551). ความพึงพอใจของสมาชิกที่มีต่อคุณภาพบริการด้านการออกกำลังกาย
กรณีศึกษาของบริษัทแคลิฟอร์เนีย ว้าว เอ็กซ์พีเรียนซ์. สารนิพนธ์ ศศ.ม. (ภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจ
เพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ). กรุงเทพฯ: บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ.
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาสารนิพนธ์: อาจารย์ ดร.อุมาพร คาดการณ์ไกล.

การศึกษาครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อการประเมินความพึงพอใจของสมาชิกที่มีต่อคุณภาพ
บริการของศูนย์ออกกำลังกาย และศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างข้อมูลส่วนบุคคลและความพึงพอใจ
ของสมาชิก การศึกษาครั้งนี้ได้ใช้แบบสอบถามจำนวน 40 ชุด ในการเก็บข้อมูลโดยการประยุกต์ใช้
เครื่องมือ SERVQUAL และสำรวจจากสมาชิกของบริษัทแคลิฟอร์เนีย ว้าว เอ็กซ์พีเรียนซ์ จำกัด (มหาชน)
จำนวน 4 สาขาในกรุงเทพมหานคร ผลจากการศึกษาพบว่า สมาชิกมีความพึงพอใจต่อการบริการทั้ง 5 มิติ
ในระดับปานกลาง ซึ่งได้แก่ การบริการที่เป็นรูปธรรม ความเชื่อถือได้ การตอบสนอง ความเชื่อมั่น และ
การเข้าถึงจิตใจ ทั้งนี้ยังพบว่ามิติด้านความเชื่อมั่น ได้รับความพึงพอใจจากสมาชิกมากที่สุด รองลงมา
คือ ด้านบริการที่เป็นรูปธรรม การเข้าถึงจิตใจ ความเชื่อถือได้ และการตอบสนอง ตามลำดับ

การศึกษาในครั้งนี้ยังสามารถสรุปได้ว่า ข้อมูลส่วนตัวของสมาชิกมีความสัมพันธ์กับระดับ ความพึงพอใจดังนี้ ในการบริการทั้ง 5 มิติ สมาชิกเพศชายมีความพึงพอใจมากกว่าสมาชิกเพศหญิง สมาชิกที่มีอายุมากกว่า 40 ปี มีความพึงพอใจมากกว่าสมาชิกกลุ่มอายุ 20 – 30 ปี และ 31 – 40 ปี ส่วนสมาชิกที่มีการศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีหรือสูงกว่า มีความพึงพอใจสูงสุดต่อมิติด้าน 'การบริการที่ เป็นรูปธรรม', 'การตอบสนอง', 'ความเชื่อมั่น' และ 'การเข้าถึงจิตใจ' ในขณะที่สมาชิกที่มีการศึกษาต่ำ กว่าระดับปริญญาตรีมีความพึงพอใจสูงสุดต่อมิติด้าน 'ความน่าเชื่อถือ' เพียงอย่างเดียว สมาชิกที่มี รายได้มากกว่า 15,000 บาทมีความพึงพอใจสูงสุดต่อมิติด้าน 'การบริการที่เป็นรูปธรรม', 'ความน่าเชื่อถือ', 'การตอบสนอง', and 'การเข้าถึงจิตใจ' ส่วนสมาชิกที่มีรายได้ต่ำกว่า 15,000 บาทมีความพึงพอใจสูงสุดต่อมิติด้าน 'ความเชื่อมิติด้าน 'ความเชื่อมั่น'

The Master's Project Advisor, Chair of Business English for International Communication Program and Oral Defense Committee have approved this Master's Project as partial fulfillment of the Master of Arts degree in Business English for International Communication of Srinakharinwirot University.

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Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to my advisor,

Dr. U-maporn Kardkarnklai, for her kind guidance, valuable comments, great encouragement,
and support.

I would like to thank Dr. Aurapan Weerawong and Assistant Professor Penny Diskaprakai, my committees, for their valuable suggestions.

I am very grateful to Mr. Mesayon Denkreangkrai, Senior Customer Service Manager, and Ms. Siwaporn Sattagornpornprom, Customer Service Manager, for their full support and permission to conduct the study.

I also would like to extend my sincere appreciation to my colleagues and friends for their great inspiration.

Finally, I am indebted to my parents and brother for their love and encouragement during my study.

Pairot Rueangthanakiet

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statements of the problem

At present, the life span of working people is shorter than those in the past because of stress and insufficient healthy food. Working people seek ways to make their life longer by reducing stress, eating healthy food and doing exercise regularly (Somchun: 2006). As a result, exercise has become a popular activity among working people. Consequently, the fitness center has become a fast growing business, especially in a cosmopolitan area. Undoubtedly the growth rate of the fitness center in Bangkok is approximately thirty percent a year (Pengpol: 2006).

As competition among the fitness centers is intensive, customers' satisfaction becomes an integral part in this kind of business. If fitness centers cannot either fulfill customer's needs, or provide good services, it will be difficult for the fitness centers to be successful in the customer-oriented market. Therefore, all fitness operators need to provide the best service to members in order to gain satisfaction.

However, customer's complaints are seen everyday in newspapers, televisions, and on the internet. Fitness Centers including California Wow Xperience Public Company Limited (Cawow) are now facing similar complaints from members. From 2006 to 2007, the Foundation for Consumers received 36 complaints from the fitness center's members. Most complaint

issues were related to unfair membership agreements, misrepresentations of fitness counselors, overall poor services, poor security systems, and not having sufficient fitness machines (Kochasenee: 2007). Hence, the researcher explores Cawow members' satisfaction whether it provides satisfactory service to its members.

Measuring customers' satisfaction needs a particular instrument called "SERVQUAL" (Parasuraman: 1985). A number of researchers have applied the SERVQUAL, which is the most practical instrument (Markovic: 2000), to measure service quality in the hospitality industry since the instrument and has a generic service application which covers the five dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy). In restaurants (Lee and Hing: 1995) and tourism (Fick and Ritchie: 1991), 'assurance' and 'reliability' dimensions were found as the highest expectation, while 'tangibles' was the lowest expectation in customer's opinions. Most researchers of previous studies found the most important dimensions influencing customer's expectations are 'assurance' and 'reliability'; while 'tangible' is the least important dimension. The present study also used an adapted version of the SERVQUAL instrument to evaluate members' satisfaction at California Wow Xperience.

In the hospitality industry, many researchers found that demographic profile (variables within a nation's population, e.g. sex, age, income level, marital status, ethnic origin and education level) influences customers' satisfaction towards service quality of service firms. Customers with a different demographic profile perceived satisfaction at different level. Sutharom (1983) investigated customer satisfaction towards the service of the

Royal Diamond Hotel in Phetchaburi Province. He found that customers, aged over 51 years old, were more satisfied with the hotel in 'product' aspect than other groups of customer (below 20, 21 – 30, 31 – 40, and 41 – 50 years). For occupation profile, Putthawithee (2003) explored consumers' satisfaction with the service of Thai massages at Damnoensaduak hospital. The findings showed that state enterprise officials and freelance perceived less satisfaction towards the service in a reputation of the hospital aspect than private company employees, merchants, and housewives. The results of both studies can be interpreted to imply that the demographic profile is an influential factor affecting customers' perception towards service quality. Studies of relationship between demographic profile and customers' satisfaction are rare in Thai fitness industry. Consequently, it is useful for Cawow to investigate such relationship in order to find out whether the result is the same.

This study attempted to explore members' satisfaction of services in the fitness center because it was advantageous to fitness centers. The researcher works as an assistant customer service manager at Cawow. His main responsibility is to handle complaints and improve service quality in order to increase the member's satisfaction level. However, it seems that the company may not achieve the high level of members' satisfaction due to the limitation of the information of the members' satisfaction surveys. Hence, the researcher was inspired to conduct research on this topic since customers' satisfaction is the heart of the service industry.

Good customer service and customers' satisfaction are possible to be attained (Harris: 1996). One important activity that all service companies should do to improve their services is to conduct a survey on customers' satisfaction. The opinions from customers will be the best source of information for service enhancement. As the SERVQUAL instrument is practical for exploring customers' satisfaction in the service industry, the researcher is interested in investigating members' satisfaction in the fitness center.

1.2 Purposes of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- 1.2.1 To examine the current level of members' satisfaction towards the service quality of California Wow Xperience in five dimensions which are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.
- 1.2.2 To study the relationship between demographic profile (sex, age, education background, and income) and members' satisfaction.

1.3 Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1.3.1 What is the level of Cawow members' satisfaction in the five dimensions which are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy?
- 1.3.2 What is the relationship between demographic profile (sex, age, education level, and income) and Cawow members' satisfaction?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study was conducted to investigate the current level of members' satisfaction and study relationships between demographic profile and members' satisfaction. The results of this study were very beneficial to all fitness centers, especially Cawow. It was submitted to the Customer Service and Marketing Department for improving its service, designing the right marketing campaign, and increasing the level of members' satisfaction.

The study on customers' satisfaction is significant since it is the best source of information for the company to improve services. Without exploring customers' opinions about the services they use, it will be difficult for the company to be successful. Consequently, all companies in the service industry such as airlines, hotels, and fitness centers, should survey customers' satisfaction regularly and ensure that customers' satisfaction is met because it is an important factor in determining the company's success.

1.5 Scope of the Study

For this study, the questionnaire was distributed to forty members of California Wow Xperience. The site for surveying was at the four main clubs in Bangkok (Silom, Pinklao, Ratchayothin, and Siam Paragon clubs). The SERVQUAL instrument was used in this study to reflect company's service in the five dimensions.

1.6. Definition of Terms

California Wow Xperience is a fitness center in Thailand. In this study, it refers to four main clubs of California Wow Xperience which are Silom, Pinklao, Ratchayothin, and Siam Paragon.

Service quality is the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service.

SERVQUAL is a service quality framework. It is also the most practical instrument, developed by Parasuraman in 1985, used for measuring service quality of a services organization.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to investigate members' satisfaction in relation to the service quality in fitness center. This chapter presents a review of literature, which consists of the Thai fitness industry, customer service, customer's satisfaction, demographic profile, and previous studies on customers' satisfaction.

2.1 Thai fitness industry

Like many Asians, Thais are becoming increasingly health conscious. Combining this with rising disposable income, decreasing interest rate, busier lifestyles, strong support from government and media, and very low penetration rates, demand for modern gyms will continue to rise. All fitness operators see the high potential in the fitness industry, reflecting more expansion from all operators. However, from the low penetration rate in Thailand, much more opportunities are still available for all operators to play in this unique business.

2.1.1 Four types of fitness operators in Thailand

Fitness operators can be categorized into four types according to the services provided as follows:

- A. Mega Club a large-sized gym complex offers both indoor and outdoor sports with other facilities such as restaurants and salons. The examples of this type of club are the Royal Bangkok Sports Club and Ratchapreuk Sports Club.
- B. Multi-Sports Center a medium-sized gym generally located in the large hotels or office buildings where some types of outdoor and indoor sports are offered.
 Sport City is an example of this type.
- C. Fitness Center is a small-sized gym, which is focused on specific types of exercise and located in office buildings, hotels, and department stores in the metro area offering services with high convenience to its target customers.
 Fitness First, Yes Fitness, Clark Hatch, and California Wow Xperience are considered the best examples.
- D. Niche Club (Body Shape, Phillip Wein, Marie France Body Line) offers specific exercise and weight control programs to particular customer groups.
- California Wow Xperience Public Company Limited is a well-known and fully-equipped fitness center which provides various kinds of fitness opportunities to its members. They can

2.1.2 Services in California Wow Xperience Public Company Limited

have a fun exercise experience with the unique services as follows:

A. Personal training is designed for people who have specific fitness goals that they want to achieve in a reasonable period of time as well as benefiting from individual specialized training with a certified trainer.

- B. Pilates is physical and mental conditioning exercise program with a unique combination of stretching, breathing, posture and movement control using specifically designed equipment, which was developed by Joseph Pilates in 1920 by combining Eastern and Western forms of exercise and body movement.
- C. Kick Fit is a unique combination of traditional boxing with the internationally acclaimed Muay Thai discipline. It is a fun filled one-on-one training with KickFit Pro, trainer.
- D. Group X refers to various kinds of class exercises (e.g. aerobics, dance, body-balance, body-combat and boxing classes) which are designed for members who enjoy doing exercises in group or with friends. The classes are classified into 4 levels (beginners, intermediate, advance, and multi-level).
- E. Hot Yoga is known as the Planet Yoga set up by Master Kamal. It is a cardiovascular workout that strengthens, tones and stretches muscles while calming the mind and reducing stress. Key benefits include weight loss, reduced stress and body detoxification through sweat. A regular practice stimulates the mind along with restoring and reshaping the body which bring vibrant health and well-being.

2.2 Customer Service

In this part, the researcher reviews customer service in the fitness context which includes definition and significance of customer service, services in fitness center, and complaint handling techniques for fitness center.

2.2.1 Definition and significance of customer service

The term "customer service" is often heard and discussed in hospitality. Several experts have various definitions. Gronroos (1990) defines 'customer service as an activity or a serie of activities of more or less intangible nature that normally, but not necessarily, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and /or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems'. In business, a person who a company serves is a customer. Hence, the word "customer" and "service" is combined into one phrase as "customer service". However, from the customer viewpoint, Harris (1996) defined customer service as any activities the company does for the customer that enhance the customer experience.

Service is a significant job in all business, especially in hospitality, because it is key for company's success in today's competitive economic environment (Harris: 1996). At present, both public and private sectors try to provide excellent service to its customers as their expectations are more demanding and sophisticated. Thus, the public and private sectors realize that providing service alone is no longer enough. According to Sachukorn (2000), providing a good service helps maintain existing customers and also influence the

new ones to consume the product and service. As a result, all companies need to be customer-oriented in order to gain competitive advantages in the market.

2.2.2 Service characteristic in a fitness center

A fitness center needs to deliver a good service the same as other companies in the service industry. According to Ward (2008), service characteristic of the fitness center differs from other service companies. In order to achieve members' satisfaction, three characteristics of the service, which the fitness center should have, are reviewed as follows:

Firstly, prompt service is the most important expectation of members in fitness business (Ward: 2008). Therefore, the fitness center needs to provide the prompt service to its members in order to gain the highest level of member's satisfaction.

Secondly, security of members is also significant to fitness business. The fitness center needs to ensure the safety of members in the clubs (e.g. safety of fitness equipment and member training program).

Finally, in the past keeping promises was rare in the fitness center because it focused on selling new memberships. Hence, after sales service was disregarded. This could easily destroy the reputation of the fitness center. Consequently, retaining its reputation by keeping promises, paying more attentions to the services, and understanding customer's needs, becomes the important service objective of the fitness center.

2.3 Customer's Satisfaction

In this part, the definition of customer's satisfaction, the role of expectation, factors affecting customer's expectation, service quality, and the SERVQUAL instrument are discussed.

2.3.1 Definitions of customer's satisfaction

Customer's satisfaction is defined as a function of performance relative to the customer's expectation. When offers have been promised and more are being delivered, this will always create satisfied customers (Chang 2000). Customer's satisfaction occurred when a firm's service, as perceived by customers, met or exceeded customer expectations (Reid and Bojanic: 2001). Furthermore, customer's satisfaction is a judgement that a product and service feature, or the product and service itself, provided a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under or overfulfilment (Oliver: 1997).

In conclusion, customer's satisfaction is mostly defined as the company's ability to fulfill the business, emotional, and psychological needs of its customers. However, customers have different levels of satisfaction as they have different attitudes and experiences as perceived from the company.

2.3.2 The role of customer's expectation in service industry

Expectations have a central role in influencing satisfaction with services, and these in turn are determined by a wide range of factors. According to both the Disconfirmation theory and the service quality, it seems to follow that lower expectations will result in higher satisfaction rating for any given level of service quality. However, there are clear circumstances

where negative preconceptions of a service provider will lead to lower expectations, but will also make it harder to achieve high satisfaction rating – and where positive preconceptions and high expectations make positive ratings more likely. The expectations theory in much of the literature seems to be an over-simplification. This seems to come from a confusion between low / high expectations and general negative / positive views of a particular service. In particular, a poor reputation or image of a service is often viewed as both a factor that will result in users viewing services more negatively and as an influence that can lower expectations.

2.3.3 Factors affecting customer's expectation

As discussed in the previous section, only providing good service can not guarantee that customers' satisfaction is achieved. The service that meets customer's expectation can result in achieving customer's satisfaction. In order to attain the highest customers' satisfaction, service companies needs to understand factors affecting customers' expectation (Pongsathaporn: 2004) as follows:

- 2.3.3.1 Word of mouth communication refers to information about a service that customers receive from people they know. Customers are afraid to try the new service because it is intangible. Therefore, they try to seek information by checking with experienced customers who are their family members and friends.
- 2.3.3.2 Personal needs and preferences are personal tastes, thoughts, and preferences which are related to differences of social class, education, family, religion, culture, personal background and etc.

2.3.3.3 Past experiences are personal experiences about the service customers have perceived. If a company usually provides extra services to its customers, they will expect to receive them again next time. They also expect other service firms to provide such services.

2.3.3.4 External communication is an advertisement that a company uses to give information to customers and build its image. This information helps customers build their expectations towards the service.

2.3.4 Service Quality

Service quality is a concept that has aroused considerable interest and debate in the research literature because of the difficulties in both defining and measuring it with no overall consensus emerging on either (Wisniewski: 2001). A number of experts in the service industry defined service quality differently. Lewis and Mitchell (1990), Dotchin and Oakland (1994), and Asubonteng et al (1996) defined the term "service quality" as the extent to which a service meets customers' needs and expectation. Parasuraman et al (1985) defined it as the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service. If expectations are greater than performance, perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occurs.

2.3.5 The SERVQUAL instrument

From a Best Value perspective the measurement of service quality in the service sector should take into account customer expectations of service as well as perceptions of

service. There is little consensus of opinion and much disagreement about how to measure service quality (Robinson: 1999 pp. 21-32). One service quality measurement model that has been extensively applied is the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1986, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1994: Zeithaml et al., 1990). SERVQUAL as often used approach for measuring service quality to compare customer's expectations before a service encounter and their perceptions of the actual service delivered (Gronroos, 1982; Lewis and Booms, 1983; Parasuraman et al., 1985). The SERVQUAL instrument has been the predominant method used to measure customers' perceptions of service quality. There are five generic dimensions which are stated in Table 1

Table 1: Five dimensions in the SERVQUAL instrument (Source: Zeithaml et al., 1990)

The SERVQUAL instrument		
Dimensions	Meaning	
Tangibles	Physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel	
Reliability	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately	
Responsiveness	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service	
Assurance	Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence (i.e. competence, courtesy, credibility and security)	
Empathy	Caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers (i.e. access, communication, understanding the customer	

2.3.5.1 Gaps in service

Gaps in service were the differences between a present quality of service and the ideal quality of service of a company (Zeithaml et al, 1990). They are important factors that the service providers or marketers in the service industry, such as hotels, airlines, and fitness centers, need to focus on and should know how to reduce or eliminate. If there are a lot of gaps in the service, the company that provides the service has a problem and will be unable to survive and exist in the market. One of the purposes of the SERVQUAL instrument is to ascertain the level of service quality based on the five key dimensions and to identify where gaps in service exist and to what extent. The gaps are defined in Table 2.

Table 2: Gaps in service (Source: Zeithaml et al., 1990)

Gaps in service	Definition
Decitioning was	Pertains to managers' perceptions of consumer's expectations and the relative
Positioning gap	importance consumers attach to the quality dimensions.
Charification gan	The difference between what management believes the consumer wants and
Specification gap	what the consumers expect the business to provide.
Delivery	The difference between the service provided by the employee of the business
Delivery gap	and the specifications set by management.
Communication gan	Exists when the promises communicated by the business to the consumer do
Communication gap	not match the consumers' expectations of those external promises.
Descention and	The difference between the consumers' internal perception and expectations of
Perception gap	the services.

If the mean score of customer's perception is lower than customer's expectation, the gap in service is larger. On the other hand, if the mean score of customer's perception is higher customer's expectations, the gap in service is smaller. Positioning, Specification, Delivery, and Communication gaps lie within the control of an organization and need to be analyzed to determine the cause or causes and changes to be implemented which can reduce or even eliminate Perception gap 5. The surveying of employees can help to measure the extent of Specification, Delivery, and Communication gaps (Zeithaml et al., 1990). This may reveal a difference in perception as to what creates possible gaps.

2.3.5.2 The SERVQUAL instrument in the hospitality business

Researchers, who had used the SERVQUAL instrument to examine consumers' expectations of hospitality service organizations, found the instrument to be a viable and reliable tool (Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller, 1992). They reached similar conclusions as to the most important dimensions of the service, that is, 'assurance', 'reliability', and 'tangibles', although they did rank them in different orders (Saleh and Ryan, 1991; Fick and Ritchie, 1991; Bojanic and Rosen, 1994; Wuest et al., 1996). Wuest et al. (1996) also reported that statistical analysis identified no significant differences among the five dimensions.

Fick and Ritchie (1991) examined the operation of the SERVQUAL instrument in three major tourism sectors: airline, restaurant and ski area service. They found that the two most important qualities concerning service were 'reliability' and 'assurance' for all three sectors.

Bojanic and Rosen (1994) examined the nature of the association between service quality as perceived by consumers and its determinants by applying SERVQUAL in a restaurant setting. The dimension rated highest on expectation was 'assurance', followed by 'reliability', 'tangibles', 'access', 'knowing the customer' and 'responsiveness'. The 'empathy' dimension was segmented into two: 'knowing the customer' and 'access'.

Lee and Hing (1995) assessed the usefulness and application of the SERVQUAL instrument in measuring and comparing the service quality of two fine dining restaurants.

The results showed that both 'assurance' and 'reliability' were the highest expectations and 'tangibles' were the lowest.

In the hotel sector, Gabbie and O'Neill (1997) reported that the highest expectations of consumers were related to the dimensions of 'reliability' and 'assurance', which the dimensions of 'tangibility' and 'empathy' were lowest in their ranking.

The previous research shows that the dimensions such as 'assurance' and 'reliability' are the most important expectations of consumers, whereas 'tangibles' and 'empathy' are the least expectation in many hospitality businesses. This study investigated these five dimensions in the fitness industry.

2.4 Demographic Profile

Markets are often segmented based on demographic variables such as age, gender, income and expenditure patterns, family size, stage in the family life cycle, educational level achieved, and occupation (Reid and Bojanic: 2001). When these variables are used in defining

consumers within the hospitality and travel industry, certain trends emerge. For instance, family size increases, the number of times per week that the families dine outside the home tends to decrease. Consequently the demographic profile influences customer satisfaction. In this section the relationship between demographic profile and customer's satisfaction is reviewed.

2.4.1 Sex profile and customer's satisfaction

Previous research found sex profile influenced customers' satisfaction because customers of different sex view services with different point of views. Therefore the perception towards the services will be not the same because of different lifestyles, behaviors, attitudes, and health conditions. For example Kelly and Turley (2001), explored customer's perceptions of service quality attributes at sporting events. He found that female fans placed significantly greater importance on 'price-related' issues in assessing service quality; while male fans felt 'concession-related' issues were more important. They pointed out that the priority concern for females when selecting products and services was price factor, but males placed more importance on other factors (e.g. necessity and benefit).

In banking, Pumprao (2003) studied customer's satisfaction on the cyber banking of Siam Commercial Bank Public Company Limited. The result showed that customers of a different sex perceived satisfaction towards the service at different levels. Male customers placed greater importance on 'information' and 'process' factors. On the other hand, female customer placed importance on 'service fees' and 'feature of website' factors. From the

above studies, it can be concluded that male and female customers have different perceptions of the service quality attributes. The findings of both studies is the same in that price is likely to be the factor that highly influences the satisfaction of female customers.

2.4.2 Age profile and customer's satisfaction

In the service industry, age profile influences customers' perception towards services provided by a company. It is possible that senior and young customers have different point of views and lifestyles (Sutharom: 2003). This idea is supported by previous research.

Kelly and Turley (2001) found that fans aged 46 to 55 placed more importance on 'facility access' attributes than fans aged 18 to 30. They also found that fans aged over 55 viewed 'fan comfort' attribute more important than fans aged 18 to 30. Moreover, fans aged 46 to 55 and over 55 placed more importance on 'convenience-related' attribute than fans aged 18 to 30.

In the hotel business, Sutharom (2003) explored customer satisfaction towards the service of Royal Diamond Hotel in Petchaburi province. The result showed that 'place' and 'product' factors were more important for customers aged over 50 years; while 'price' and 'promotion' were more important for customers in the below 20, 21 – 30 and 31 – 40 age groups. The researcher can conclude that 'price-related' and 'promotion' are not issues that determine perceptions towards the service quality of older customers.

The reviews show that 'price' and 'promotion' factors seems to be more important to young customers, while 'convenience', 'place', and 'product' factors are more important to

older customers. Since Cawow has members of many ages, a study of the relationship between the age profile and members' satisfaction is needed.

2.4.3 Educational profile and customer's satisfaction

Education profile influences people points of view towards services. It may be because higher educated people's opinions and attitudes differ from lower educated ones. In the service industry, most customers with a high education level place more importance on the quality of service, while customers with a low education level place more importance on the cost of service. This may be because they have different incomes. Higher educated members can afford expensive service fees if they get a quality service. (Leurchakittikul: 2001). Previous research in different businesses is reviewed as follows:

In sport, according to Kelly and Turley (2001), 'fan comfort' and 'convenient' issues were more important for fans with an advanced degree than fans with a college degree. On the other hand, 'price-related' issues were more important for fans with a lower education level as they get lower income. Therefore 'price-related' issues have a high impact on their perceptions.

In the airline business, Tuangrattanagul (2002) studied Thai passengers' satisfaction with the services of Thai airways focusing on the international route. He found that 'seat comfort', 'safety' and 'facility' issues were more important for passengers with an advance degree than those with a high school and college degrees. However, 'price of ticket' issues were more important for passengers with high school or college degree.

In the yoga business, Leurchakittikul (2001) explored customers' attitude towards the usage of yoga exercise training centers in Bangkok. A questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. The results showed that customers with Bachelor's and Master's degrees were more satisfied with yoga center's service which includes facility, comfort, and teaching quality. Rungjumrussopa (2003) examined customers' satisfaction towards the service of fitness center. She found that 'promotion and price' were less important to members with an advanced degree.

In summery, The findings in both sport and airline businesses were found that 'comfort' and 'convenience' issues are most important to customers with a high education level, while 'price' and 'promotion' issues are most important to customers with a low education level. The researcher is interested in studying the relationship between the education profile and members' satisfaction in the fitness center.

2.4.4 Income profile and customer's satisfaction

Income level is often related to customers' satisfaction because the different levels of income can influence people's attitude on using services. This idea can be supported by previous research both in sport and transportation that revealed the same result as follows:

Kelly and Turley (2001) found that 'facility access' and 'fan comfort' were significantly less important for fans earning less than US\$20,000 than they were for fans earning between US\$40,000 and US\$50,000. In addition, 'convenience' issues were significantly less important for fans earning less than US\$20,000 than it was for fans earning between US\$40,000 and

US\$50,000, and over US\$50,000. From the result, it showed that fans with higher income mostly placed more importance on 'fan comfort' and 'convenience' issues.

Moreover, Techathipmanee (2003) investigated passenger satisfaction for the BTS sky train after its launch. He found that 'convenience' and 'facility' factors (e.g. service, cabin, and location) were more important for passengers earning above 35,000 baht; while passengers earning below 35,000 baht viewed 'price' and 'promotion' factors more important to them.

From the above findings, it can be concluded that 'price' and 'promotion' factors determine the satisfaction of customers earning low income, while 'convenient' and 'fan comfort' factors influence the satisfaction of those with high income.

The studies in sport and transportation found the common result that high income customers place 'convenience' and 'facility' factors more important, while low income customers place a premium on 'price' and 'promotion'. The relationship between the income profile and members' satisfaction in the fitness center also needs to be explored.

2.5 Previous studies on customers' satisfaction

Most service companies see the importance of evaluating their services by exploring customers' satisfaction in order to have useful information for service enhancement. Studies of customers' satisfaction are widely explored around the world. In this section, the researcher reviewed some previous studies of customers' satisfaction in various types of business.

Malloy and Urman (2005) examined resident satisfaction with fitness and recreation services at Wellness Center. Questionnaires, including questions about demographic information, frequency of the center use, previous experiences with fitness, changes in physical and emotional health after using, and satisfaction with facilities, services, and staffs, were employed to 515 residents. The result revealed that most residents had moderate satisfaction with facilities, services, and staffs of the Wellness Center. Residents noted that more fitness equipment (e.g. cardio machines and weight machines) was needed to be upgraded and repaired. The residents also requested more frequent and diverse group class offerings (e.g. dance class and aquatic class). Moreover, several participants commented on the importance of adequate space and cleanliness in personal areas (e.g. locker rooms, bathrooms, showers).

In sport, Greenwell, Fink, and Pastore (2002) studied the influence of the physical sport facilities on customer satisfaction within the context of the service experience. 218 minor league ice hockey spectators were used to investigate the satisfaction using 8 variables; access, aesthetic, scoreboard, comfort, layout, core, staff, and satisfaction. The findings showed that customers reported high levels of satisfaction especially in the core product and seat comfort variables. The spectators also commented that managers should address the physical facility in combination with other targets of quality to improve spectator's levels of customer satisfaction.

Moreover, Luerchakittikul (2002) investigated customers' attitude towards the usage of Yoga exercise training centers in the Bangkok metropolitan area in five aspects; general service, personnel, location, price, and public relation. A questionnaire was employed to 400 customers in the Bangkok metropolitan. The results showed that customers' attitude was at a high level in all aspects. The personal aspect was at the highest level, followed by location, public relation, general service, and price respectively.

Panittumrong (2004) examined the consumer's opinion towards Clark Hatch Fitness

Center. The questionnaire was distributed to 405 Clark Hatch members. The result showed that the consumer's opinion towards the fitness center in overall aspects was at a high level.

Physical evidence, people, price, and place aspects were rated highly level while promotion was rated at a moderate level.

Rungjumrussopa (2003) explored customers' satisfaction in the Bangkok metropolitan are towards the service of fitness centers. The questionnaire was employed to 400 members of 19 of the International Health Racquet and Sportsclubs Association (IHRSA). The result revealed that customers' satisfaction in the Bangkok metropolitan area towards the service of fitness center in overall aspects was at moderate level except place aspect which was at a high level.

Putthawithee (2003) studied consumers' satisfaction with the service of Thai massages at Damnoensaduak hospital. The data was gathered from 150 respondences by a questionnaire using an application of the SERVQUAL instrument. The results showed that most customers

were satisfied with the Thai massages service at Damnoensadouk hospital. The highest satisfaction was placed on empathy, assurance, and tangibility. The relatively low satisfaction was on reliability and responsiveness.

Lastly, Kulsri (2003) studied customer satisfaction towards the Computer Products' After Sales Service of NEC Thailand limited. 400 people, who used After-Sales service of NEC Computer Products, were selected based on "Convenience Sampling" method. A Questionnaire was use as a tool for data collection. The result showed that customers who used after sales services of NEC (Thailand) Limited had a moderate-appreciation of all aspects (place of service center, repairing service, and pricing). Only customers of a different age perceived no difference in level of satisfaction on place, price, and service. However, male customers had higher satisfaction on the three aspects than female customers.

In summary, the previous studies found that not all service companies can deliver satisfactory services to their customers. In many services sectors, the findings show that the customers have a moderate to high level of satisfaction in the service sectors such as sport service, fitness centers, hospital, and call center. A study of members' satisfaction at Cawow should be further explored. Therefore, the researcher is inspired to conduct a study on customers' satisfaction toward the service quality of California Wow Xperience to find out if the result is the same.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology of the study is discussed. It consists of four sections, subjects of the study, research instruments, procedures and data analysis.

3.1 Subjects of the study

In this study, 40 subjects (20 Thais and 20 foreigners) were randomly selected from four main clubs (Silom, Pinklao, Ratchayothin, and Siam Paragon) of California Wow Xperience Public Company Limited (Cawow). The subjects were asked to complete the questionnaire during February and March 2008. Ages of the subjects were between twenty to above forty years old.

3.2 Instruments of the study

A questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The researcher applied the SERVQUAL instrument in designing the questionnaire for measuring customers' satisfaction because it covered the service in five dimensions, which were tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The questionnaire was distributed to the forty members at the four club locations in Bangkok.

There were two parts to the questionnaires. Part 1 was the demographic profile which consisted of age, sex, educational level, and income. Part 2 was the relationship between demographic profile and members' satisfaction. In this section, the subjects were asked to rate the satisfaction level towards the services of Cawow. The rating scale was from 1 to 5 (5 is excellent, whereas 1 is poor). These questions reflected the relationship between demographic profile of Cawow's members and their satisfaction in the five dimensions: 'tangibles', 'reliability', 'responsiveness', 'assurance', and 'empathy'.

3.3 Procedures of the study

Before distributing the questionnaire to the 40 Cawow members, the researcher did a pilot study by distributing the questionnaire to 5 Cawow members (3 Thais and 2 foreigners) on February 1, 2008. Members commented that the number of questions was appropriate and the language used in the questionnaire was concise and easy to understand. The result showed that the members' satisfaction in the five dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) was at average level. Members were mostly satisfied with 'tangibles' dimension, followed by 'assurance', 'empathy', 'responsiveness' and 'reliability' respectively. As well as, these members also gave comments about the service of some other departments they had experienced such as Sales, Operation, Yoga, and Group X. Therefore it was interesting for Cawow to conduct a satisfaction survey for each department separately so that the company would get more information for further service enhancement.

3.4 Data Analysis

Forty copies of the questionnaire were analyzed in three sections: demographic profile of members, level of members' satisfaction, and the relationship between demographic profile and members' satisfaction. The Likert's Scale was employed in the questionnaire for each question; (5 – excellent, 4 – good, 3 – average, 2 – fair and 1 – poor). Table 3 represents the intervals of satisfaction level.

Table 3: Intervals of Satisfaction Level (Poonlarbtawee: 1987)

Rating Scale	Satisfaction Level	Mean Score
5	Excellent	4.51 – 5.00
4	Good	3.51 – 4.50
3	Average	2.51 – 3.50
2	Fair	1.51 – 2.50
1	Poor	1.00 – 1.50

In addition, percentage and mean score were calculated by using the SPSS for WINDOW. They were used to represent the level of member's satisfaction for each dimension.

The results were tabulated, and illustrated using bar graphs and text. In this section, three results of members' satisfaction towards service quality of Cawow were shown and discussed.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents results of the study consisting of the demographic profile of members, level of members' satisfaction, and relationship between demographic profile and members' satisfaction.

4.1 Demographic profile of members

In this section, the demographic profile of California Wow Xperience (Cawow) members was classified by sex, age, education level, and income.

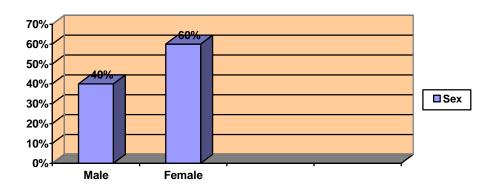


FIGURE 1 Sex profile

Figure 1 shows that male subjects in this study make up 40% and female subjects are 60% of the total number of respondents. The number of female subjects was larger than male subjects, which could be because men were interested in a variety of sports (e.g. football, basketball, and golf) which were not found at California Wow Xperience.

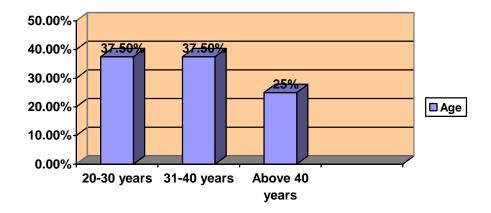


FIGURE 2 Age profile

In this study, members from 3 age groups were selected. The subject group aged 20 – 30 years old accounted for 37.5%, 31 – 40 years old, 37.5%, and above 40 years old, 25%. Members aged 20 to 40 years old, were found at the fitness center more than those aged above 40 years. This might be because most activities and class exercises in the fitness center were designed for younger people.

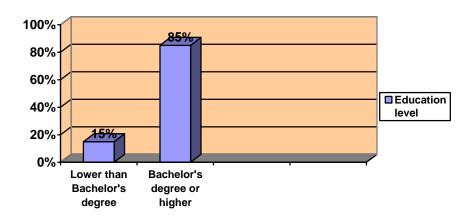


FIGURE 3 Educational profile

Educational profile was divided into 2 levels (below Bachelor's degree and Bachelor's degree or higher). The majority of the respondents (85%) were members with Bachelor's degree or higher. Most of them were office employees. However, the minority of the respondents (15%) were members with an educational background lower than a Bachelor's degree. Most of them were housewives, merchants, and students.

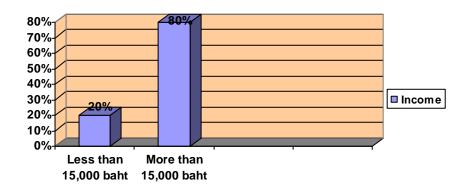


FIGURE 4 Income profile

The Income profile was also categorized into 2 levels (below 15,000 baht and more than 15,000 baht per month). 80% of the respondents were members earning more than 15,000 baht per month. The rest, 20% of the respondents, were members earning less than 15,000 baht. The respondents in this category were similar to the education profile in that most members earning less than 15,000 baht and holding degrees lower than a Bachelor's were housewives and students.

The next section presents the result of members' satisfaction towards the five dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) using the SERVQUAL instrument.

4.2 Level of members' satisfaction

In this section, the researcher discusses the level of members' satisfaction at California Wow Xperience Public Company Limited (Cawow). This study applies the SERVQUAL instrument to design a questionnaire. The total subjects in this study are 40 Cawow members derived from the 4 main clubs in Bangkok. The results of members' satisfaction are shown in Figure 5.

Level of Members' Satisfaction

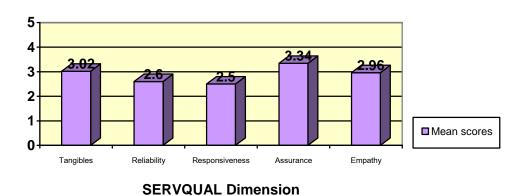


FIGURE 5 Level of members' satisfaction

Figure 5 shows the level of members' satisfaction. The mean scores of members' satisfaction in the five dimensions (tanigibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) were at the average level (2.88). Similarly, Molly and Urman (2005) examined resident satisfaction with fitness and recreation services at Wellness Center. Although Molly and Urman did not apply the SERVQUAL instrument to examine the participant satisfaction, their variables were part of the SERVQUAL dimensions and the results revealed that the resident satisfaction was at the average level in overall aspects.

In hospitality, customers mostly rate their highest satisfaction on 'assurance' dimension. According to Carman (1990), it is the most significant dimension that influences customers' satisfaction because service is intangible and is difficult to evaluate. Hence, all service companies try to do everything to make customers happy with their services. In this study, the result showed that the highest score (3.34) among the five dimensions was 'assurance', followed by 'tangibles' (3.02), and 'empathy' (2.96). In addition, members rated their highest satisfaction in the 'assurance' dimension which included job knowledge, skill of staff, and security. This may be because Cawow instructors have a background in sports science and are well trained before starting to train members. Therefore, this can ensure members' safety. The result is also supported by one member who commented that:

"I am very satisfied with Cawow instructors since they are courteous, well-trained, skillful, and knowledgeable in their job. All classes are fun and safe because the instructors are always aware of members' safety".

This comment indicated that the member was satisfied with the services of Cawow in the 'assurance' dimension. The knowledge and courtesy of staff as well as the ability to inspire member's trust and confidence (i.e. competence, courtesy, credibility, and security) could increase the level of members' satisfaction.

The result is consistent with Gabbie and O'Neill (1977) who examined customer satisfaction using the SERVQUAL instrument in the hotel sector, and with Fick and Ritchie (1991) who studied the operation of the SERVQUAL instrument in three major tourism sectors: airlines,

restaurants, and ski area services, in that the most important dimensions of the service are 'assurance' and 'tangibles'. Thus, it can be concluded that the 'assurance' dimension is mostly found as the highest level of satisfaction among customers in the hospitality industry such as hotels, airlines, restaurants, ski area services, and fitness centers. If companies are unable to inspire trust and confidence in their customers, it will be difficult for them to achieve a high level of customer's satisfaction (Sachukorn: 2000).

Responsiveness is often found as the lowest level of satisfaction among customers in the service industry including a fitness center. This may be because staff are not willing to provide prompt and good service to members (Kholthanasep: 2001). In this study, the result showed that the 'responsiveness' dimension was rated as the lowest score (2.5) among the five dimensions, followed by the 'reliability' (2.6) dimension. It was highly possible that the members' dissatisfaction occurs when members do not receive prompt service from the fitness center if they have concerns or need help. This could be supported by a member who commented that:

"I was once promised to get a Samsung mobile phone as the gift for recommending friends to apply for memberships. I had to follow up the gift with my fitness counselor for 6 months to get it. This was really unsatisfactory".

The comment reflected that this member did not receive prompt service when he or she had a problem. If the sales counselor cannot solve the problem, he or she should ask other departments or staff to handle or solve it immediately for the member. Consequently, the inability to provide prompt service can result in members' dissatisfaction.

Prompt service is an important expectation of customers who use the service, especially in restaurants, hotels, and fitness centers. Customers judge the service as poor when the speed of service does not meet their expectations. Previous research of restaurants and hotel settings found that the 'responsiveness' dimension was also reported as the lowest satisfaction level among the five dimensions. For example, Bojanic and Rosen (1994) examined the nature of the association between service quality as perceived by consumers and its determinants by applying SERVQUAL in a restaurant setting. They found that customers rated 'empathy' and 'responsiveness' as the lowest expectation in their studies. Kholthanasep (2001) studied customer expectations and perceptions of service quality delivery by first class hotels in the Bangkok metropolitan area. In her study, the lowest customers' expectation and perception was placed on 'responsiveness'. Both restaurants and hotels did not deliver prompt service to the customers. Hence, 'responsiveness' is the dimension service operators need to focus on and improve as the first priority.

In conclusion, the 'responsiveness' dimension is often rated as the lowest satisfaction and expectation in the service industries such as restaurants, hotels, and fitness centers.

However, Zeithaml et al., (1990) explained that the 'responsiveness' dimension in the SERVQUAL was willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Therefore, it will be beneficial to California Wow Xperience if the company can ensure that the service provided by its staff, especially the willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service, meet member's expectation and satisfaction. The next section will be a discussion of the relationship between demographic profile and members' satisfaction.

4.3 Relationship between demographic profile and members' satisfaction

This section discusses the relationship between demographic profile (age, sex, education background, and income) and members' satisfaction.

4.3.1 Sex and members' satisfaction

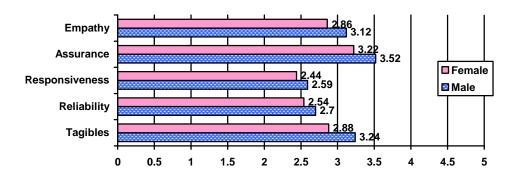


FIGURE 6 Sex and members' satisfaction

Overall, male members were more satisfied with the five dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) than female members. However, in the 'tangibles' and 'responsiveness' dimensions female members were more satisfied with some aspects than male members (see Figure 7).

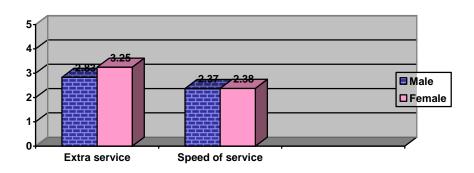


FIGURE 7 Mean differences on sex profile

In the 'tangibles' dimension, female members were more satisfied with extra beauty treatment services which were related to beauty (e.g. slimming, firming, and toning programs, and face massage and skin lightening) than male members. This may be because most female members are more interested in beauty and more conscious about body and shape than male members. These beauty services may stimulate and influence their satisfaction.

According to Pongsathaporn (2004), personal needs influence customers' expectations towards the service due to sex differences. Apart from keeping healthy, female members prefer to use extra beauty treatment services such as slimming, firming, toning programs, facial massage, and skin lightening to enhance their appearance. The result is consistent with Pacheruk (2004) in that the service variety such as beauty treatment services (facial massage, body oil massage, and hair and skin treatment) were most satisfying to female customers and easily influenced their satisfaction.

In the 'responsiveness' dimension, female members placed a greater satisfaction level on the speed of service. This may be because a female is more flexible and patient than a male. According to Pacharuk (2004), most female members agree to wait for the service since they want their needs to be fulfilled (e.g. female members want to use beauty treatment service. They can wait for the service for hours since they want to be beautiful. Therefore, they are willing to wait for the service longer than male members. The result is similar to that of Putthawithee (2003) in that female consumers of Damnoensaduak hospital were more patient and happier to wait for the service than male consumers.

4.3.2 Age and members' satisfaction

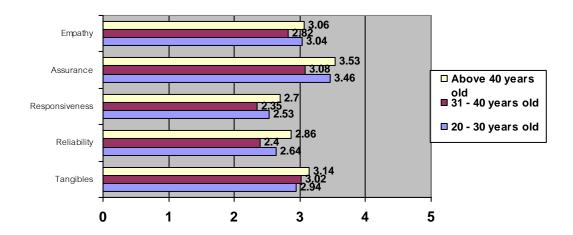


FIGURE 8 Age and members' satisfaction

Regarding overall scores, members aged above 40 years old were more satisfied with the five dimensions than members aged 20 to 30 and 31 to 40 years old. This may be because most senior members (above 40 years old) are not interested in using extra services and cannot do all types of exercise in the fitness center because of their age and limitations of their ability to do some exercises. Thus, senior members seldom have unsatisfactory experiences such as misrepresentations of fitness counselors, reductions of class exercise, and staff's inappropriate manners (Wangpen and Inthornma: 2007).

In regard to each dimension, members aged 20-30 and 31-40 years old were more satisfied with some aspects in 'tangibles' and 'responsiveness' dimensions (see Figure 9).

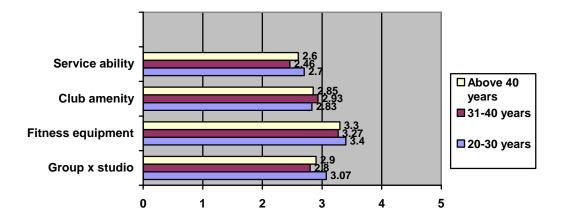


FIGURE 9 Mean differences on age profile

In the 'tangibles' dimension, members aged 20 to 30 were more satisfied with group x studio and fitness equipment than the other two age groups. However, members aged 31 to 40 placed greater satisfaction on club amenities than members aged 20 to 30 and above 40 years old. It is highly possible that most activities and equipment at the fitness center are arranged and designed for young members. Hence, they are happy with Group X studio and fitness equipment. However, the objectives of doing exercise in the fitness center of members aged 30 – 40 years old are relaxing, making new friends and keeping good health.

Thus, they need good quality club facilities and amenities. The result is similar to that of Rungjumrussopa (2003) in that members in the age of 20 – 30 years were more satisfied with the service of their fitness center including atmosphere, quality of equipments, and staff service, which were parts of the 'tangible' dimension, while members aged 31 to 40 and 40 to 49 years were more satisfied with location and club facilities.

In the 'responsiveness' dimension, members aged 20 to 30 were more satisfied with the service ability of staff than members aged 31 to 40 and above 40. It is possible that

young members have less experience in using the services of fitness centers than elder members who have more experiences and have used the services provided by many fitness centers (Wangpen; & Inthornma: 2007). This is supported by Aday and Anderson (1975) and Pongsataporn (2004) who explained that past experiences of customers in using a service can influence their satisfaction. The more past experience customers have in using services, the more difficult for the company to make them satisfied. The result is also similar to that of Panittumrong (2003) in that young members had less experience in using a service. They could not compare the current service with the past experience, hence, they were more satisfied with abilities of staff to provide services than senior members.

4.3.3 Educational level and members' satisfaction

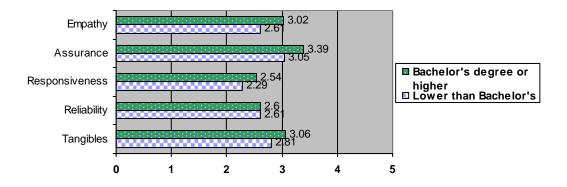


FIGURE 10 Educational level and members' satisfaction

Figure 8 shows that members with a Bachelor's degree or higher were more satisfied with 'tangibles' (3.06), 'responsiveness' (2.54), 'assurance' (3.39) and 'empathy' (3.02) dimensions than those with an educational level lower than a Bachelor's degree who were more satisfied with the 'reliability' (2.61) dimension.

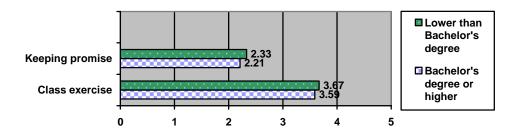


FIGURE 11 Mean differences on educational profile

Figure 11 presents the interesting result that in members with an educational level lower than a Bachelor's degree were also more satisfied with 'keeping promises' aspects in the 'tangibles' dimension, and members with a Bachelor's degree or higher were more satisfied with 'class exercise' aspect in the 'reliability' dimension.

In the 'tangibles' dimension, members with an educational level lower than a Bachelor's degree were more satisfied with the variety of class exercises than members with a Bachelor's degree or higher. This may be because most members with the lower degree are interested in attending group exercises rather than other kinds of extra activities such as pilates, boxing training, and spa since most of them cannot afford such expensive services. According to Luerchakittikul (2002), group exercises offered opportunities for members to do various kinds of exercise without additional charges. Therefore, customers with a low educational level had a better attitude towards the class exercise issue than customer with a higher educational level.

In the 'reliabilty' dimension, members with a Bachelor's degree or higher were less satisfied with keeping promises than members with an educational level lower than a Bachelor's degree. This may be because members with the higher degree have more knowledge, self-

confidence, and self-esteem than those with the lower degree. They may have higher expectations of the service (Wangpen; & Inthornma: 2007). Thus, it is highly possible that they are very unsatisfied if the services do not meet their expectations and needs. The result is consistent with Wangpen and Inthornman (2007) in that members with a high education level have more expectations of the service. When the service does not meet their expectations, it is highly possible that they are more dissatisfied with it. It can be summarized that education background is related to satisfaction of customers and members. In this service company, high income customers are tentatively less satisfied with the services than low income customers.

4.3.4 Income and members' satisfaction

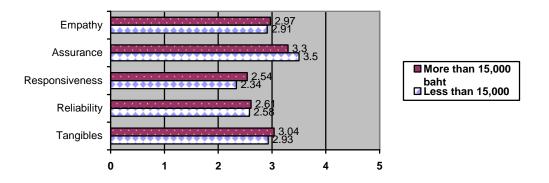


FIGURE 12 Income and members' satisfaction

In this study, income profile was divided into 2 levels; more than 15,000 baht and less than 15,000 baht per month. The findings revealed that members earning more than 15,000 baht rated the higher satisfaction on the 'tangibles' (3.04), 'reliability' (2.61), 'responsiveness' (3.3), and 'empathy' (2.97) dimensions, while members earning less than 15,000 baht were more satisfied with the 'assurance' (3.3) dimension.

Regarding each dimension, the result is interesting in that some aspects in the 'tangibles' dimension were more satisfying to members earning less than 15,000 baht, and some aspects in 'reliability' dimension were less satisfying to those earning more than 15,000 baht (see figure 13).

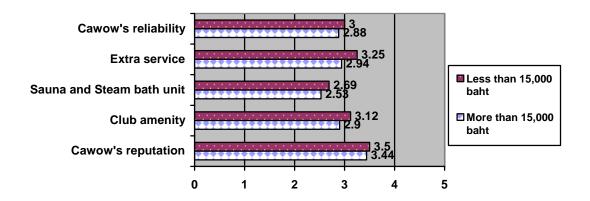


FIGURE 13 Mean differences on income profile

In the 'tangibles' dimension, members earning less than 15,000 baht were more satisfied with the Cawow's reputation, club amenities, adequacy of sauna and steam bath unit, and extra services. This may be because members with income less than 15,000 baht always compare benefits they receive with the money they spend. At present, although the membership application fees are much cheaper than before, Cawow still maintains its service quality at the same level. Therefore, it is highly possible that lower income members are more satisfied with the 'tangible' dimension than higher income members. According to Pongsathaporn, in most cases customers with less income like to make sure that they get a lot of benefits prior to paying for the service. The result is consistent with Rungjumrussopa

(2003) in that customers earning less income consider the benefit they will receive from the service before paying for it. The service can meet their expectation and it is highly possible that they are always satisfied with the service.

In the 'reliability' dimension, members earning more than 15,000 baht were less satisfied with Cawow's reliability than members earning less than 15,000 baht. This may be because members earning more than 15,000 baht have more opportunities to use services provided by other fitness operators located in luxurious hotels than other group members (Panittumrong: 2004). If the members experience service failures, such as misrepresentations of fitness counselors, they can compare the service with other fitness operators. The result is similar to that of Wangpen and Inthornma (2007) in that high income members have higher expectations towards the service. It is possible that they have more tendencies to be unsatisfied with the service failures. The researcher concludes that customers with different incomes are satisfied with the services at different level because they have different attitudes, expectations and abilities to pay for the service. In the sport industry, the 'tangibles' and 'reliability' dimensions are mostly satisfactory in low income members.

In conclusion, the demographic profile is related to members' satisfaction. Members with different demographic profiles view the service quality at different level. Female members are mostly satisfied with bathrooms and toilets, special services provided, and speed of service. Members aged 20 to 30 years were most satisfied with Group X studio and the ability to deliver a quality service. Members with educational levels lower than a Bachelor's

degree were mostly satisfied with Cawow's reputation. Members with income more than 15,000 baht were least satisfied with Cawow's reliability. These findings are a good source of information for Cawow's management to enhance services and increase the level of members' satisfaction.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a conclusion, implication of the study, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further studies.

5.1 Conclusion

This study aims to measure members' satisfaction of service quality in fitness business and study the relationship between demographic profile and members' satisfaction. The SERVQUAL instrument, developed by Parasuraman (1985), was applied in designing the questionnaire which consists of two parts: the relationship between a demographic profile and members' satisfaction. The study was conducted from February 2008 to March 2008. The total subjects of this study were 40 members of California Wow Xperience from 4 main clubs in Bangkok (Silom, Pinklao, Siam Paragon, and Ratchayothin).

The results showed that members' satisfaction in the five dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) was at the average level. The highest level of members' satisfaction was placed on the 'assurance' dimension, followed by 'tangibles' and 'empathy' respectively. The two lowest members' satisfaction levels were placed on the 'reliability' and 'responsiveness' dimensions.

In addition, a demographic profile relating to sex, age, education background, and income affects satisfaction. Overall, male members were most satisfied with the five dimensions.

Regarding each dimension, female members were more satisfied with the 'tangibles' dimension in 'extra services' (slimming, firming, toning programs, facial massage as well as skin lightening) and with the 'responsiveness' dimension in 'speed of service' than male members.

From the three age groups, members aged above 40 years old were most satisfied with the five dimensions. When comparing each dimension, members aged 20 to 30 were more satisfied with the 'tangibles' dimension in 'Group X studio' and 'fitness equipment', and with the 'responsiveness' dimension in 'service ability of staff' than members aged 31 to 40 and above 40 years old. However, members aged 31 to 40 placed the greater satisfaction on 'club amenities'.

For the educational profile, members with a Bachelor's degree or higher were most satisfied with the 'tangibles', 'responsiveness', 'assurance', and 'empathy' dimensions while those with an educational level lower than a Bachelor's degree were most satisfied with the 'reliability' dimension. With regard to each dimension, members with an educational level lower than a Bachelor's degree rated higher satisfaction level on the 'tangibles' dimension in 'variety of class exercises' than members holding a Bachelor's degree or higher. On the other hand, members with a Bachelor's degree or higher, were less satisfied with the 'reliability' dimension in 'keeping promises'.

Overall, members with higher income were most satisfied with 'tangibles', 'reliability', 'responsiveness', and 'empathy', whereas members with less income were most satisfied with the 'assurance' dimension. Regarding each dimension, members earning less than

15,000 baht per month were more satisfied with the 'tangibles' dimension in 'Cawow's reputation', 'club amenities', 'adequacy of sauna and steam bath unit', and 'extra services'. However, members earning more than 15,000 baht per month were less satisfied with the 'reliability' dimension in 'Cawow's reliability'.

5.2 Implications of the study

In this study, the researcher found both strengths and weaknesses in Cawow's service quality. Since the 'assurance' dimension showed the highest satisfaction level in members' opinion, Cawow should maintain service quality on this dimension. However, the 'reliability' and 'responsiveness' dimensions were found to show the lowest satisfaction level among the five dimensions, Cawow should not take its reputation for granted and improve the service quality on these dimensions, especially in 'Cawow's reliability', 'keeping promises', and 'problem solving' to retain its good image and reputation.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Some limitations are found in this study as follows:

5.3.1 The number of the subjects is limited.

The subjects in this study were limited to only 40 members of California Wow Xperience from 4 main clubs in Bangkok (Silom, Pinklao, Ratchayothin, and Siam Paragon) which have full facilities and fitness equipment. If more subjects were drawn from other clubs throughout Bangkok, the result would be more generalized.

5.3.2 This study focuses on service quality in the fitness center.

This study focused on measuring members' satisfaction of towards service quality in fitness center. Other health care businesses (e.g. spas, slimming centers and niche clubs) which are becoming popular among health conscious people are also interesting to explore customers' satisfaction since they are highly acceptable to those who do not like doing exercises. The result may be useful to such businesses.

5.4 Recommendations for further studies

Further research should be undertaken to validate the results of this study. The researcher finds several opportunities to extend this study as follows:

5.4.1 Surveying on the 'responsiveness' dimension

The 'responsiveness' dimension is important to the fitness business since most customers expect to receive prompt services from the company when they have concerns. Members will not be satisfied if the company's staff is not willing to help customers or provide prompt services to them. This study found that the 'responsiveness' dimension was rated as the lowest level of satisfaction. To increase the level of members' satisfaction in the 'responsiveness' dimension, Cawow should explore members' opinions of how to increase the level of members' satisfaction on the 'responsiveness' dimension.

5.4.2 Evaluating quality of service

In order to maintain the high quality of service, a service company should regularly evaluate its service quality (e.g. every 6 months and annually). Moreover, it is also a good

idea to have the service evaluation completed separately by each department in order to get in-depth information for service enhancement. Without evaluating service quality, the company cannot satisfy the customers because it does not know what the customers think about its service.

5.4.3 Exploring customers' attitude towards the service quality in other businesses

Based on the results of this study, the researcher finds it interesting to conduct further

research on customers' attitudes towards service quality of other health care business such

as spas and slimming centers (both direct and indirect competitors of fitness centers)

because these businesses are popular and profitable in the Thai market. The result will be

useful information for fitness centers to be able to serve more groups of customers by

increasing its products and services.



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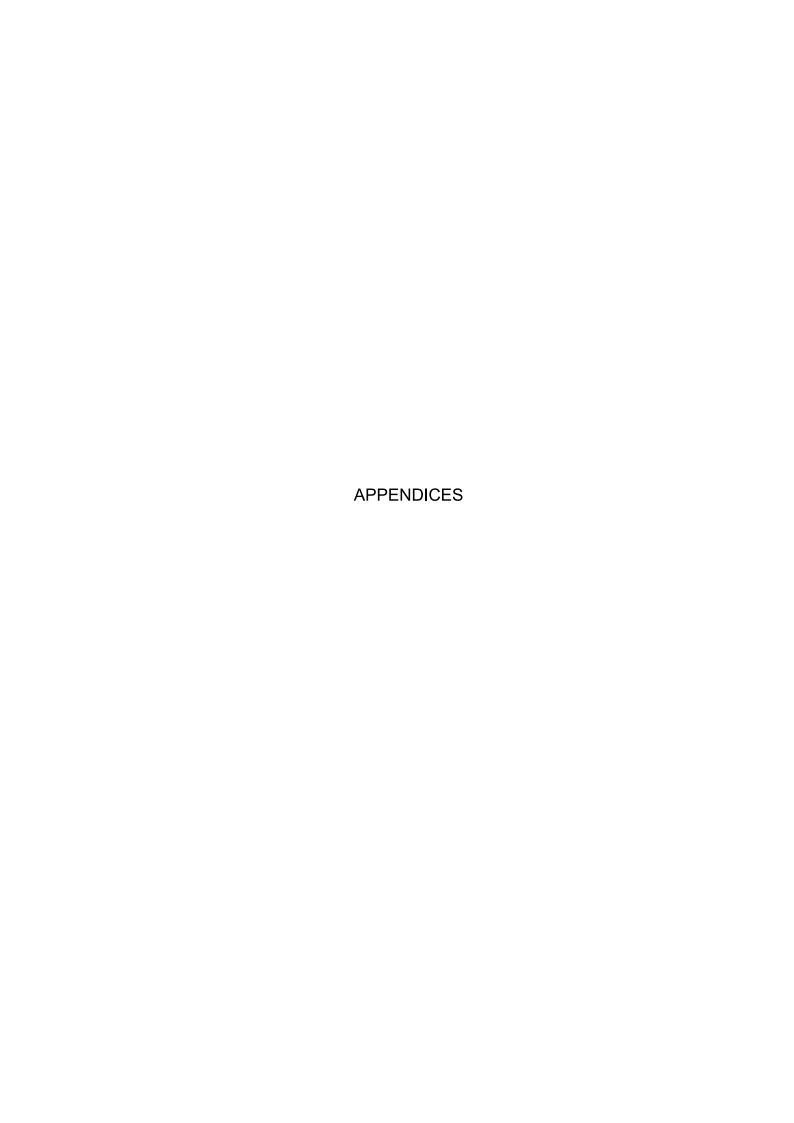
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การบริการของแคลิฟอร์เนีย ว้าว เอ็กซ์พีเรียนซ์		ระ	ะดับความพึง	พอใจ	
ด้านที่ 1: การบริการที่เป็นรูปธรรม	มากที่สุด	มาก	ปานกลาง	น้อย	น้อยที่สุเ
ชื่อเสียงของบริษัทฯ					
1. บริษัทฯมีชื่อเสียงและภาพลักษณ์ที่ดีเมื่อเทียบกับศูนย์ออกกำลังกาย					
อื่นๆในระดับเดียวกัน เช่น ฟิตเนสเฟิร์ส ดิโอลิมปิค ทรูฟิตเนส ฯลฯ					
การออกแบบของสโมสร					
2. สโมสรมีการตกแต่งอย่างสวยงามและเป็นสัดส่วน					
เครื่องออกกำลังกาย					
3. เครื่องออกกำลังกายมีคุณภาพ และทันสมัย					
4. เครื่องออกกำลังกายมีครบครัน สามารถเลือกใช้ได้ตามความต้องการ					
5. เครื่องออกกำลังกายมีปริมาณเพียงพอต่อสมาชิก					
ห้องออกกำลังกาย (Group X)					
6. ห้องออกกำลังกาย (Group X studio)สำหรับชั้นเรียนต่าง ๆ เช่น โยคะ					
แอโรบิค บอดี้คอมแบท ไทชิ มีเพียงพอต่อสมาชิก					
7. ห้องออกกำลังกาย (Group X studio)สำหรับชั้นเรียนต่าง ๆ เช่น โยคะ					
แอโรบิค บอดี้คอมแบท ไทชิ สะอาด					
เครื่องใช้ในสโมสร					
8. เครื่องใช้ในสโมสร เช่น ผ้าเช็ดตัว ครีมอาบน้ำ แชมพู กระดาษชำระ					
และสำลี มีคุณภาพ					
9. เครื่องใช้ในสโมสร เช่น ผ้าเช็ดตัว ครีมอาบน้ำ แชมพู กระดาษชำระ					
และสำลี สะอาด					
ห้องอาบน้ำและห้องสุขา					
10. ห้องอาบน้ำและห้องสุขาสะอาด					
11. ห้องอาบน้ำและห้องสุขามีปริมาณเพียงพอ					
ห้องชาวน่าและห้องอบไอน้ำ					
12. ห้องซาวน่า (Sauna) และห้องอบไอน้ำ ให้บริการอย่างเพียงพอ					
ชั้นเรียนออกกำลังกาย					
13. ชั้นเรียนออกกำลังกายมีความหลากหลาย และมีหลายประเภทให้เล็ก	อก 🗌				
เช่น บคดี้ คลมแบท บคดี้บาลานซ์ แคโรบิค โยคะ ฯลฯ					

การบริการของแคลิฟอร์เนีย ว้าว เอ็กซ์พีเรียนซ์		ระดับความพึงพอใจ				
	มากที่สุด	มาก	ปานกลาง	น้อย	น้อยที่สุด	
การบริการพิเศษอื่น ๆ						
14. สโมสรมีการบริการพิเศษอื่น ๆ อย่างครบครัน เช่น การลดน้ำหนัก การกระซับสัดส่วน การเสริมสร้างกล้ามเนื้อ การนวดหน้า และการปรับ	่ ผิวขาว					
พนักงาน						
15. พนักงานแต่งกายเรียบร้อย						
16. พนักงานมีความเป็นมิตร เช่น ยิ้มแย้มแจ่มใสขณะให้บริการ						
ด้านที่ 2: ความเชื่อถือได้						
ความน่าเชื่อถือของบริษัทฯ						
17. บริษัทฯ มีความน่าเชื่อถือในการให้บริการสมาชิก						
การปฏิบัติตามคำสัญญา						
18. พนักงานฝ่ายขายสมาชิกภาพ สามารถปฏิบัติตามคำสัญญา						
ที่ให้ไว้กับท่านอย่างสม่ำเสมอ และให้บริการท่านได้ตรงกับ						
ข้อเสนอพิเศษ ต่าง ๆ ตามที่เสนอไว้ ณ วันที่สมัครสมาชิกภาพ						
ความสามารถในการให้บริการลูกค้าอย่างมีคุณภาพ						
19. พนักงานฝ่ายลูกค้าสัมพันธ์สามารถให้บริการท่านได้อย่างมีคุณภาพ และตรงกับความต้องการ						
ด้านที่ 3: การตอบสนอง						
ความรวดเร็วในการบริการ						
20. เมื่อท่านมีปัญหา หรือต้องการร้องเรียนเกี่ยวกับบริการ						
พนักงานรับเรื่องเพื่อแก้ไขปัญหาของท่านทันที						
ความสามารถในการบริการ						
21. พนักงานแสดงความกระตือรือร้นในการรับฟัง และแก้ไขปัญหา						
22. พนักงานใส่ใจและเข้าใจถึงปัญหาของท่าน						
การแก้ไขปัญหา						
23. พนักงานสามารถเสนอแนวทางแก้ไขปัญหาได้เหมาะสม						
ตรงกับความต้องการของท่าน						
ด้านที่ 4: ความเชื่อมั่น						
ความรู้และทักษะของพนักงาน						
24. พนักงานมีความรู้ ความสามารถ และทักษะในอาชีพและงานของตน	ı 🗆					

การบริการของแคลิฟอร์เนีย ว้าว เอ็กซ์พีเรียนซ์		ระเ	ดับความพึงเ	พอใจ	
	มากที่สุด	มาก	ปานกลาง	น้อย	น้อยที่สุด
. •					
ความสุภาพของพนักงาน					
25. พนักงานให้บริการท่านอย่างสุภาพ และสามารถไว้วางใจได้		Ш	Ш	Ш	
ความปลอกภัย			_		_
26. ครูฝึกสอนคำนึงถึงความปลอดภัยของสมาชิกขณะฝึกสอนในชั้นเรียบ อย่างสม่ำเสมอ	. -				
ด้านที่ 5: การเข้าถึงจิตใจ					
ความสามารถในการเอาใจใส่สมาชิก					
27. พนักงานแสดงความใส่ใจท่านขณะให้บริการ					
28. พนักงานเข้าใจถึงความต้องการของลูกค้า และสามารถตอบสนอง					
ได้อย่างเหมาะสม					
การสื่อสาร					
29. พนักงานสื่อสารกับลูกค้าได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ					
4					
30. กรุณาระบุความคิดเห็นเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับบริการของ แคลิฟอร์เนีย ว้าว	ว เอ็กซ์พีเรีย	นซ์			

ขอขอบพระคุณทุกท่านที่สละเวลาในการตอบแบบสอบถาม

California Wow Xperience Members' Satisfaction Questionnaire

 $\underline{\text{Direction}}$ Please select one of the best answer that describes yourself.

Part 1 The relationships between demographic profile and members' satisfaction

Direction: Please mark (/) on the best answer.

The Service of California Wow Xperience (Cawow)		Level of satisfaction				
	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	
Dimension 1: Tangibles						
Company's reputation						
1. The reputation and image of Cawow is as good as other						
fitness centers in the same class e.g. Fitness First,						
The Olympic, True Fitness						
Club design						
2. The design of the club is beautiful. It is very functional and						
well-set out for all activities.						
Fitness equipment						
3. The club provides quality and modern fitness equipment.						
4. The club is fully equipped with fitness equipment.						
5. The amount of fitness equipment in the club is enough						
for members.						
Group X studio						
6. The number of Group X studios for classes such as Yoga,						
Aerobics, Body Combat, Tai-Shi, is enough for members.						
7. Group X studios for classes e.g. Yoga, Aerobics,						
Body Combat, Tai-Shi, are clean.						
Club amenities						
8. The quality of club amenities e.g. towel, shower cream,						
shampoo, tissue, cotton pad, is good.						
9. Club amenities e.g. towel, shower cream, shampoo, tissue,						
cotton pad, are clean.						
Bathrooms/toilets						
10. Bathrooms and toilets are clean.						
11. The number of bathrooms and toilets is enough for members.						
Steam bath unit and Sauna						
12. The number of Steam bath units and Saunas is enough						
for members.						

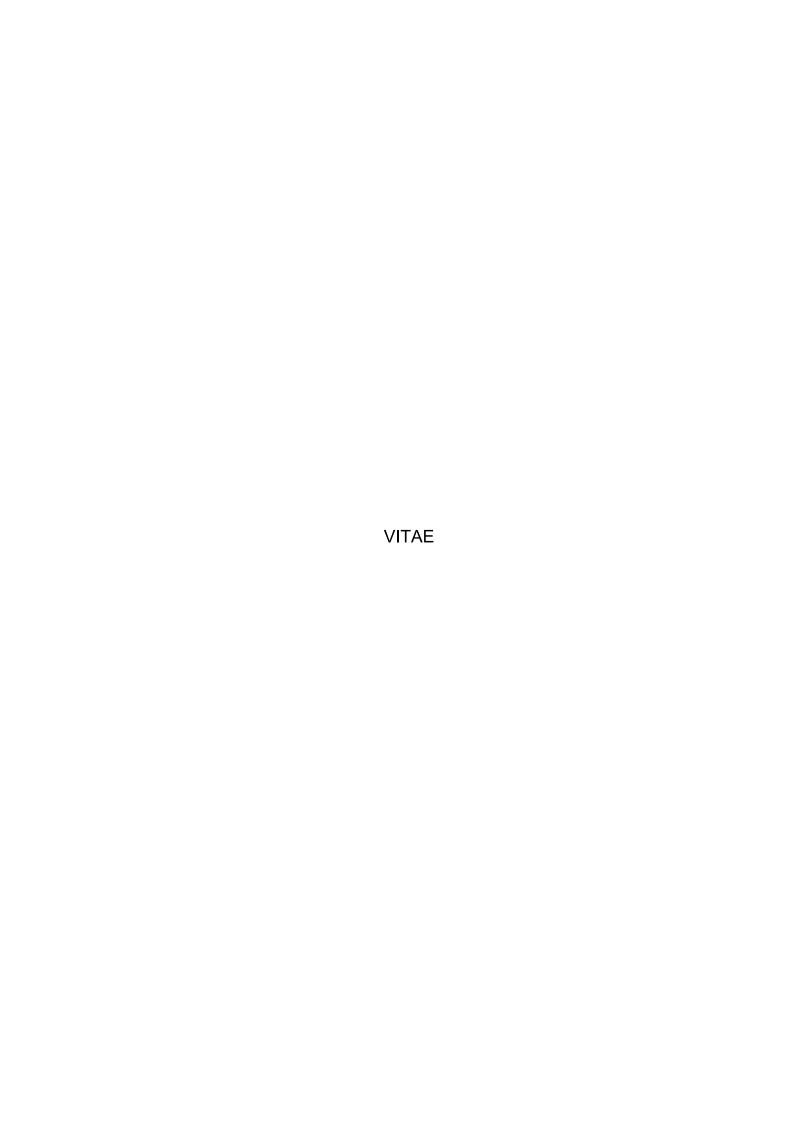
The Service of California Wow Xperience (Cawow)		Level of satisfaction				
	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	
Class exercises						
13. The club provides a variety of class exercises,						
e.g. Body Combat, Body Balance, Aerobics, and Yoga.						
Extra services						
14. The club provides extra services e.g. slimming, firming,						
toning, facial massage as well as skin lightening.						
Staff						
15. Staff appear neat e.g., uniform, and grooming.						
16. Staff are friendly e.g. smiling while providing services.						
Dimension 2: Reliability						
Cawow's reliability						
17. Cawow is reliable in providing service to members.						
Keeping promises						
18. Fitness counselors always stick to their words and can serve						
you based on the special offers on the application date.						
Ability of deliver quality service						
19. Customer Service staff, which fulfill your needs, provide						
you with quality services.						
Dimension 3: Responsiveness						
Speed of service						
20. If you would like to complain about services, staff in charge						
handle your problems immediately.						
Service Ability						
21. Staff are eager to listen and solve problems.						
22. Staff pay attention to your concerns and understand						
your problems.						
Problem solving						
23. Staff provide solutions that serve your needs.						

The Service of California Wow Xperience (Cawow)		Lev	el of satisfa	ection	
	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Dimension 4: Assurance					
Job knowledge and skill of staff					
24. Staff have knowledge, capability, and skill in their job					
responsibilities.					
Courtesy and Politeness of staff					
25. Staff are courteous and trustworthy.					
Security					
26. Group X Instructors are always aware of members' safety while	е 🗌				
class exercises are being conducted.					
Dimension 5: Empathy					
Ability to express personalized attention					
27. Staff give you personalized attention while providing services.					
The Service of California Wow Xperience (Cawow)		Lev	el of satisfa	ection	
	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
28. Staff understand customer's needs and are able to					
respond appropriately.					
Communication					
29. Staff are able to communicate effectively with members.					
30. Any other comments about the service provided by California	Wow Xper	ience Pu	ıblic Comp	any Limite	ed

Part 2 Questions about demographic profile

1. Sex				
	() Male	() Female
2. Age				
	() 20 – 30 years		
	() 31 – 40 years		
	() Above 40 years		
3. Edu	cati	on level		
	() Lower than a Bachelor's degree	() a Bachelor's degree or higher
4. Inco	me			
	() below 15,000 baht	() More than 15,000 baht

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire



VITAE

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