

# Level of customer satisfaction on the service quality personal trainer

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**Abstract**: This research intends to identify customer satisfaction with the service quality provided by the personal trainers. This research was arranged based on theoretical studies related to the level of customer satisfaction with a particular service. The research was a descriptive quantitative study with a survey method and a questionnaire as the research instrument. This study was done in Health and Sports Center Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (HSC UNY) Fitness Center. Purposive sampling was used to do sampling on this research. Criteria of the samples were customers who used the services of a personal trainer at the HSC UNY Fitness Center, and the personal trainers were registered as employees of the facility. The sample size consisted of 15 people out of the total population of 700 people. Research data were analyzed by the Likert scale method. The validity and reliability tests of the questionnaire obtained a validity value of 0.875 and 40 valid statement items out of a total of 50 statement items. The result of data analysis showed that the level of customer satisfaction with the service quality of personal trainers is Very Satisfactory, with a mean score of 87% for all aspects. The tangible element scored 87%, the reliability aspect scored 88%, the responsiveness aspect scored 89%, the assurance aspect scored 88%, and the empathy aspect scored 81%. This study suggested that personal trainers improve their service quality to the customers to increase the number of customers.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, service quality, personal trainers

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# **INTRODUCTION**

Good physical fitness is the dream of all people. The rapid development of technology and high economic demands have forced most of the community members to spend extra energy to achieve what they desire. Physical fitness is one's ability to conduct daily activities without experiencing significant exhaustion (Sulistiono, 2014; Nasrulloh, et al., 2021). Physical fitness is not something that can be immediately achieved, as it requires constant and continuous training to generate the maximum result (Arifin, 2018).

Sports is one of the physical activities that can increase one's physical fitness quality. Bangun (2016) points out that sports can maintain physical fitness. The simplest form of sports is walking. Although walking may seem simple, many people often ignore this activity. Nevertheless, at present, technology has allowed many things to be more accessible and practical, including exercising and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Many people have seized this opportunity to do sports in a way that suits their daily life because they are aware of the benefits and various positive things that can emerge from doing sports with good management. Edwards & Rowe (2019) stated that one of the important things to ensure that sports manage to generate health is adaptability and the opportunity to develop. Today, sports do not necessarily require a wide area or space. Many forms of physical exercise can be done in a small space by making use of the advancements in technology. Indoor physical fitness centers which do not require an expansive space are now commonly available for everyone.

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Fitness center services can be commonly found in big cities and smaller towns, with various interesting offers to attract potential customers. The development of fitness centers and services are due to the fact that good physical fitness and health are the needs of all individuals and the increasing awareness on the importance of sports to improve the boAn excellent immunity. Yogyakarta Special Region is one of the provinces in Indonesia with a great number of fitness centers and charities. Fitness centers can be found across the regencies of the Yogyakarta Special Region. One of the prominent fitness centers in the Sleman regency is the fitness center facility at the Health and Sports Center of Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (HSC UNY) which is located at Jl. Colombo No.1 Karang Malang Caturtunggal of the Depok district. This facility is one of the business units of Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta State University. The location is strategic and accessible due to its proximity to the city center, making it easy for customers to locate and visit the fitness center.

As a business and provider of service, certainly, there is a competition between fitness centers in the community to meet the demands of the members. The management of a fitness center needs to apply good management functions in order to improve the quality of its service (Nasrulloh, et al., 2021). León-Quismondo et al. (2020) stated that the success of the organizational system of a fitness center could be reflected in how the fitness center fulfills its responsibility in terms of the company's welfare and providing service for the customers or users. One of the efforts of a fitness center in providing service to meet the needs and demands of customers is by providing personal trainer services. Becoming a professional personal trainer is not an easy process. A competent personal trainer must master the knowledge and understanding of sports-related sciences, such as anatomy, to ensure that the developed training program addresses customers' preferences. The entire training program should be based on science. On the other hand, acquiring this type of knowledge takes time. Today, many personal trainers gain certifications offered from various places by taking a short course. It is certainly not sufficient to understand the sciences only from a short course. A professional personal trainer needs more than just certification. Suharto (Rismayanthi & Kurnianto, 2015) describes a number of things that a good professional personal trainer must have, including the ability to create a varied training program, deal with problems faced by the customers, and master and apply essential knowledge on nutrition, the principles of training, anatomy, human physiology, and sports biomechanics.

Based on the background, this study examines customer satisfaction with the service quality of personal trainers of the HSC UNY Fitness Center. No former studies have been done on this subject at this particular research location. Further, it is essential to note that all personal trainers at HSC are graduates of the Sports Science department with a unique concentration of physical fitness who essentially must master the basic knowledge in physical fitness from their study. This study aims to identify the percentage of customer satisfaction level with the service provided by personal trainers during the duration of the training program. Personal trainers can learn whether their service quality is excellent, fair, poor, or very poor based on the customer satisfaction level with their service. Moreover, it is expected that the research findings serve as material for evaluation for each personal trainer to consider what aspects of service they need to improve.

# METHOD

The research is a descriptive quantitative study with the survey method. An online questionnaire by Google Form supports the survey method to accommodate the time limitation in distributing the questionnaires. This study was done in Health and Sports Center Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (HSC UNY) Fitness Center. The research population consisted of 700 customers enter in 2020. The sample size consists of 15 people based on two criteria: customers of active members and who had used the service of a personal trainer listed as the employee or permanent workers of the facility. The validity and reliability tests of the research instruments before the data collection ensure accurate and consistent results. The research instrument consists of 40 items that had undergone validity and reliability tests and scored 0.875 from the initial 50 statements. This study employed the Likert Scale data analysis technique, which is used to measure the perception of individuals or a group on a particular social phenomenon (Sugiyono in Rahman et al., 2020).

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Element	Question Grids	Item Number
Tangible Aspect	Results felt by customers	1 - 9
Reliability	Personal trainer's competence Training schedule	10 - 19
Responsiveness	Personal trainer's responsiveness and readiness	20 - 27
Assurance	Safety Assurance	28 - 33
Empathy	Customers' access to personal trainers Personal trainer's attention toward customers	34 - 40

 Table 2. Instrument Grille

# **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

There are two types of data in this study, primary and secondary data. Data analysis results showed that customer satisfaction with the service quality of personal trainers at the HSC UNY Fitness Center belongs in the Very Satisfactory category, with an overall average score of 87%. All five aspects scored high. The tangible element scored 87%, the reliability aspect scored 88%, the responsiveness aspect scored 89%, the assurance aspect scored 88%, and the empathy aspect scored 81%.

The following tables present the research findings based on each aspect and the overall elements.

Item			Score		Percentage		
Number	4	3	2	1 (%)		Criteria	
1	10 ps	5 ps	0 ps	0 ps	92	Very Satisfactory	
2	5 ps	10 ps	0 ps	0 ps	92	Very Satisfactory	
3	5 ps	10 ps	0 ps	0 ps	83	Very Satisfactory	
4	6 ps	9 ps	0 ps	0 ps	85	Very Satisfactory	
5	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory	
6	9 ps	6 ps	0 ps	0 ps	90	Very Satisfactory	
7	5 ps	8 ps	2 ps	0 ps	80	Very Satisfactory	
8	8 ps	7 ps	0 ps	0 ps	88	Very Satisfactory	
9	6 ps	9 ps	0 ps	0 ps	85	Very Satisfactory	
	Mean Sco	re of the T	angible Aspect		87	Very Satisfactory	
Item	Table 5. L		Score		ts on the Reliabilit Percentage		
Number	4	3	2	1	(%)	Criteria	
10	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory	
11	9 ps	6 ps	0 ps	0 ps	90	Very Satisfactory	
12	10 ps	5 ps	0 ps	0 ps	92	Very Satisfactory	
13	8 ps	7 ps	0 ps	0 ps	88	Very Satisfactory	
14	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory	
15	9 ps	6 ps	0 ps	0 ps	90	Very Satisfactory	
16	10 ps	5 ps	0 ps	0 ps	92	Very Satisfactory	
17	8 ps	7 ps	0 ps	0 ps	88	Very Satisfactory	
18	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory	
	Mean Scor	e of the Re	liability Aspect		88	Very Satisfactory	
Т	able 6. Dis	tribution o	f the Questionna	ire Results of	on the Responsive	ness Aspect	
Item		Score			Percentage	Critorio	
Number	4	3	2	1	(%)	Criteria	

Table 4. Distribution of the Questionnaire Results on the Tangible Aspect

Item	Score			Percentage	Criteria	
Number	4	3	2	1	(%)	Cinterna
20	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
21	8 ps	7 ps	0 ps	0 ps	88	Very Satisfactory
22	9 ps	6 ps	0 ps	0 ps	90	Very Satisfactory
23	11 ps	4 ps	0 ps	0 ps	93	Very Satisfactory

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24	9 ps	6 ps	0 ps	0 ps	90	Very Satisfactory
25	9 ps	6 ps	0 ps	0 ps	90	Very Satisfactory
26	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
27	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
20	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
Ν	Aean Score o	f the Resp	89	Very Satisfactory		

 Table 7. Distribution of the Questionnaire Results on the Assurance Aspect

Item	Score Per Item		Percentage (	(%)	Criteria	
Number	4	3	2	1		
20	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
29	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
30	9 ps	6 ps	0 ps	0 ps	90	Very Satisfactory
31	6 ps	9 ps	0 ps	0 ps	85	Very Satisfactory
32	8 ps	7 ps	0 ps	0 ps	88	Very Satisfactory
33	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
29	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
30	9 ps	6 ps	0 ps	0 ps	90	Very Satisfactory
Mean Score of the Assurance Aspect			88		Very Satisfactory	

#### Table 8. Distribution of the Questionnaire Results on the Empathy Aspect

Item	Score Per Item			Percentage	(%)	Criteria
Number	4	3	2	1		
34	1 ps	10 ps	4 ps	0 ps	70	Satisfactory
35	2 ps	10 ps	3 ps	0 ps	73	Satisfactory
36	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
37	8 ps	6 ps	1 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
38	6 ps	8 ps	1 ps	0 ps	83	Very Satisfactory
39	3 ps	12 ps	0 ps	0 ps	80	Very Satisfactory
40	7 ps	8 ps	0 ps	0 ps	87	Very Satisfactory
Mean Sc	ore of the As	ssurance Asp	ect	81		Very Satisfactory

Table 9. Level of Customer Satisfaction

Number	Aspect	Percentage (%)	Category
1.	Tangible Aspect	87	Very Satisfactory
2.	Reliability	88	Very Satisfactory
3.	Responsiveness	89	Very Satisfactory
4.	Assurance	88	Very Satisfactory
5.	Empathy	81	Very Satisfactory
	Mean	87	Very Satisfactory

Based on the data in Table 9, the overall level of customer satisfaction on the service quality of personal trainers at the HSC Fitness Center showed a Very Satisfactory score (87%). All five aspects in Table 9 have Very Satisfactory scores (more than 81%) when compared to the score interpretation criteria on Table 3. The highest percentage score is the responsiveness aspect (89%), whereas the lowest is the empathy aspect (81%).

Winarni & Lismadiana (2020) defined competence as the reflection of one's knowledge and skills when thinking and taking actions. In the fitness field, competence is closely related with the education of a personal trainer, who ideally must have a sports science degree with a concentration on physical fitness. The physical fitness concentration aims to make students competent in physical fitness and expect students to become professionals in the field of sports or physical fitness, such as personal trainers.

Today, there are many personal trainer certifications that can be obtained easily. However, the main difference between personal trainers with no sports education background and those who graduated from a higher education program is the competency that they have. Personal trainers at HSC UNY are all graduates of the Physical Fitness Department at the Faculty of Sports Science of Yogyakarta State

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University. Physical fitness is one of the concentrations in the Faculty of Sports Science of Yogyakarta State University. This means that the HSC personal trainers have studied in-depth the science of physical fitness for more or less four years as part of their degree. As a result, they have higher competence, as well as more profound knowledge and experience than those who rely on instant certification program with no sports/fitness education background. As the training program is developed based on considerations on the physical fitness sciences, HSC personal trainers can provide a service and full explanation to the customers about the training program and give trustworthy advice on how to avoid mistakes which can hinder the objective of the training, or injuries due to an unsuitable training program.

Physical fitness is one of four concentrations available in the Sports Science undergraduate study program at Yogyakarta State University, in addition to rehabilitation therapy, sports management, and adaptive sports. All concentrations in the Sports Science undergraduate study program have a knowledge foundation on natural sciences. However, the courses in all four concentrations are a combination between natural and social sciences, although natural sciences remain the dominant or primary discipline which must be mastered by students in their study.

Some branches of the natural science discipline which must be studied in the special education in the physical fitness field include the human physiology and anatomy, nutrition, and human biomechanics. Human physiology and anatomy discuss the body structure and function of each organ in the human body. Meanwhile, Syampurma (2018) stated that nutrition is a branch of science which studies the relationship between food and one's physical health. On the other hand, biomechanics is concerned with the analysis of the organism's working system based on mechanic principles (Mouromadhoni & Kuswanto, 2019). Human biomechanics is important to analyze the human body movements in doing daily activities in an appropriate, correct, and safe way. All HSC personal trainers have possessed the knowledge on these subjects as a requirement for them to obtain their degree in sports science with a concentration on physical fitness. Having a degree also means that they have more comprehensive competencies as they have mastered the basic knowledge and principles required to become competent professionals in physical fitness.

Mastery on sports science that the HSC personal trainers have acquired is important to help them provide answers for customers, especially in regard to the training program results. Moreover, Antoni & Suharjana (2019) stated that community health and fitness have become a need. The culture of sports among the community serves not only to support health, but has become a basic need in the community's lifestyle (Dharmawan et al., 2018). There are many aspects which must be considered in a training program development. First, it is important that personal trainers give an understanding and detailed explanation when dealing with customers who wish to get a quick result. Personal trainers at the HSC UNY Fitness Center must also utilize their competency to consider the members' diet and daily food intake during the duration of the program. It is important to study the food intake based on the principles of nutrition to ensure that the members' diet support the success of the program. All personal trainers are able to give a clear explanation to members regardless of their background in sports. The optimal training results can only be felt or obtained in a certain duration due to the physiological processes of the body which require time. This then becomes the basis for personal trainers to provide an understanding to the members on the importance of time to obtain the best possible results.

The types of training programs developed by HSC personal trainers are highly varied based on the needs of the members. For example, there are programs aimed for body building, body shaping, fat loss, and physical fitness. Aerobic and anaerobic are the types of training exercise that are common in a fitness center. On the other hand, jogging, biking, and swimming are sports or exercises that belong in the aerobic category (Patel et al., 2017). Aerobic training tends to have a relatively longer duration with medium intensity movements. As a comparison, the duration of aerobic training may take more than 20 minutes, whereas anaerobic training has a shorter duration. The characteristic of anaerobic training includes a short training duration with high intensity movements.

The fitness equipment at the HSC Fitness Center highly supports the success of the training program. The training programs mentioned above are delivered optimally based on each program's characteristics. The availability of good fitness equipment is enhanced by skilled personal trainers who are experts in operating the equipment. In addition to being competent in operating the equipment, personal trainers also consistently conduct regular maintenance of equipment prior to and after being used in the training program. Moreover, personal trainers will promptly inform the management when

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there are issues or damages with the fitness equipment so that they can immediately fix the problem. This is done to ensure that the safety of members becomes the main priority of service. The best service can be offered when the equipment is up to the safety standards and the personal trainers are competent in operating the equipment in an appropriate, correct and safe manner.

The responsiveness aspect scores the highest in customer satisfaction level with 89% (Haryani et al., 2020). Responsiveness is the ability of an employee in providing service in a responsive manner by giving quick and reliable assistance and meeting the needs of the customer. Table 2 shows that the responsiveness aspect includes the responsiveness and readiness of the HSC personal trainers in assisting customers during training. All personal trainers at the HSC Fitness Center have managed to meet the demand for a high-quality service by scoring as high as 89% in the responsiveness aspect. However, such a high score is expected as all personal trainers are graduates of the physical fitness department. They are expected to master and understand all aspects related to physical fitness. The ability to create a suitable training program naturally prompts a good sense of responsiveness from each personal trainer as they provide a service and meet the demands of the gym members because they have acquired the basics of developing a training program.

On the other hand, the empathy scores the lowest of all the aspects, although it remains in the Very Satisfactory category with 81%. Empathy refers to the state where one gives more attention to another person to the point that they understand what the other person feels or experiences. The term can also be defined as the ability of an individual to put himself/herself in another person's shoes (Ratka, 2018). Bošnjaković & Radionov (2018) consider empathy as an opportunity to understand the social and environmental condition at a certain time. Moreover, according to Stanger et al., empathy is one's action to understand another person's emotional condition (2017). The empathy aspect is certainly related to the personal trainer's respective personality. Although all personal trainers at HSC have the same competency in physical fitness, they certainly have different empathy skills from one another. There needs to be an identification due to the high percentage gap between the empathy aspect and other aspects. This is important because a lack of attention to the empathy aspect without further intervention may lead to a bigger problem.

The subject of empathy turns the scope of discussion to the psychological influence on the success of training. Psychology certainly has an important role in supporting the performance of an individual or an athlete when training or competing. When the anatomical, physiological, and psychological aspects of an athlete are all in good condition, there is a bigger chance of increased performance (Amansyah, 2019). A trainer or a sports expert, either the main coach or a special expert in psychology of athletes by offering empathy. It is common for a proper high-achieving professional sports team to have a trainer or a professional who is an expert in psychology. In the fitness center, a personal trainer must also be able to play this role for the customers or members. Therefore, it is important that a personal trainer have a high sense of empathy. Based on a study by Amansyah, a good psychological condition is one of the main factors in improving an athlete's performance. Not only athletes, fitness center members with no athletic background also require a good psychological condition in order partake in the training program with a good mood.

Nevertheless, empathy offered by personal trainers toward members should not be excessive. There is a consideration in regard to the training target because too much empathy may cause trainers to give a training program with a lighter intensity, which can hinder the achievement of the most optimal training outcomes. Therefore, trainers may offer empathy with a comprehensive explanation to members to ensure the success of the program. This combination will indirectly force the members to be wiser in managing their own psychology. By doing this indirectly, personal trainers do not necessarily have to remind customers to manage their mental state or psychology. Reminding customers that their target may be difficult to achieve when they only do a light intensity workout may give pressure to the customers, whereas a direct warning may worsen the psychological state of the customers. According to Umayah et al.,(2017), when a person is able to understand other people's condition, then that person has a high sense of empathy. Empathy can be used as an way to understand, knowing, and judging other people (Effendy & Indrawati, 2018). It is therefore crucial that all explanations be given in a considerate way by attempting to understand the psychological or mental state of the customers in order to create a sense of trust and empathy for the customers.

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The competency in physical fitness possessed by HSC personal trainers does not necessarily guarantee that all personal trainers are competent in the empathy aspect. The aspect of empathy is crucial because of the nature of the personal trainer profession which requires direct interaction with members or customers when providing a service. The research findings show that the empathy aspect is the lowest compared to other aspects. Although the empathy aspect still scores high and belongs in the Very Satisfactory category, the lack of attention to this aspect will have a great impact on the customer satisfaction and loyalty in being a permanent member. Setianto & Wartini (2017) stated, each company should notice to use empathy during giving their service, for creating fidelity from customers for the service that the company has given. The varied occupations of the members must be taken into consideration by all personal trainers. It is important that personal trainers take into account the emotional state of the members to ensure that they feel understood. Personal trainers must attempt to get close to the members as much as possible. Furthermore, (Gustini, 2017) stated that the meaning of empathy is a person's ability to understand and comprehend state of mind and feeling from other people without removing their identity. Great knowledge and competence alone are not sufficient for gaining satisfaction and loyalty from the members. The empathy aspect, therefore, has a central role in the physical fitness service, especially in building a relationship between personal trainers and members and creating a training program that is adjusted to the activities and emotional condition of each member.

One of the ways to offer empathy and give a sense comfort to the members is by casually asking them about their daily activities. Attention to the customers' daily activities can be done by all personal trainers because there may be something that impacts the customers' health prior to the training program. Customers may complain before training that they have an extra workload with no preparation for the training, but the training schedule requires them to do the hardest exercise in the training program. In these moments, the sense of empathy of the personal trainer must be utilized. This is because matching with Amalia statement (2019) which stated that empathy is a basic communication between two individuals. A personal trainer must be able to understand the physical and emotional conditions of the member who have extra workload with no preparation for the training. If the training program is not adjusted to their daily activities, the members may be offended because the personal trainer has failed to understand the condition that they are in due to heavy workload prior to training.

Therefore, it is instrumental that personal trainers understand what the members do before training. High intensity activities due to work demands may make the members overworked and exhausted before training. The safety of a customer may be endangered if the personal trainer insists on continuing with the workout while the customer's health is not in the best performance. Forcing members who are not in their best condition to follow a high intensity workout training program also makes them vulnerable to health issues due to overtraining or excessive training load. (Pratiwi & Ashadi, 2018) decreasing in concentration , change in mood , and easily getting exhausted in more than 24 hour , is an general characteristics of someone who got overtraining. In addition to poor health condition due to overtraining, the body parts will also be more prone to injuries because of the decrease in the muscle performance due to a constant high-intensity training. Injuries that happen because of a lack of empathy and understanding of personal trainers on the members' condition will affect the image of the personal trainers, but also the management. It is very likely for members to tell their experience to others because of a great disappointment toward the service provider.

This is certainly unfortunate to many stakeholders. Every employee performance evaluation is needed to improve fitness centers. Asteriniah (2021) stated that in order for an organization or agency to be able to achieve its purpose, one of the ways that can be done is to evaluate every employee's performance. Poor service toward even just one of the members will lead to the defamed name and image of all personal trainers and management in the business. This shows the importance of the empathy aspect among HSC personal trainers. Although the aspect has scored Very Satisfactory, there is still a room for improvement. Underestimating this seemingly simple aspect may result in many unfortunate occurrences in other aspects. For example, the trustworthiness and financial aspects may be severely affected by a lack of empathy among personal trainers as prospective members will be discouraged to join the fitness center and as a result opt to consider personal trainers at other fitness centers with better empathy skills. Meanwhile, in terms of the financial aspect, active members in fact do have the option to stop their subscription, whereas prospective members may become disinterested

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due to the poor stories about personal trainers that fail to understand the feelings of the customers. As a result, the management's financial condition will be affected as well, because the main source of income comes from customers who now may leave for another fitness center.

# CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be drawn based on the analysis of the research findings and discussion of this study is that the level of customer satisfaction toward the personal trainers belongs in the very satisfactory category with an overall percentage score of 87%. This finding reflects the education background of the personal trainers, as all trainers are graduates of the sports science department with a concentration on physical fitness. This means that they have in-depth knowledge in subjects related to physical fitness, such as human anatomy and physiology, nutrition, and human biomechanics. Therefore, personal trainers are all competent in their field as evident by the degree they earned in sports science with a special concentration in physical fitness.

This study suggests that personal trainers continuously improve their service quality for customers and pay more attention to improve their empathy skills toward members. As indicated by the research findings, there is a considerable gap between the empathy aspect and other aspects in terms of customer satisfaction level. A continuous improvement in all aspects will lead to an overall improved service quality and more customers.

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