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**THE ROLE OF SPORT MANAGEMENT IN STUDY AND COMPARISON OF
QUALITY OF SERVICES LEVEL WITH SATISFACTION AND FIDELITY OF
CLIENTS IN GOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE CLOSED ARENAS IN SHIRAZ**

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ABSTRACT

Today, the global economy market has changed significantly than before. Throughout the world, commercial organizations try to achieve exclusive profits and places through the Nile more than other rivals. On the other hand, customers and consumers always look for the suppliers who offer their merchandises and services better. So the aim of current study is the role of sport management in study and comparison of quality of services level with satisfaction and fidelity of clients in governmental and private closed arenas in Shiraz.

The statistical society of current study, were the users of closed arenas in Shiraz. 605 clients of governmental and private clubs (437 persons from the private clubs and 168 persons from the governmental clubs) who had at least 6 months sport activity record in these clubs were selected as subjects by using random sampling method. The data collecting tools were , Yi Chin Liu questionnaire (2008) which its validity was confirmed by expert professors and the stability was calculated through Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha=0.94$). The Spearman and Mann-Whitney U test correlation coefficients were used for data analyzing.

The study findings show that, there is a significant relationship between quality of services variable with fidelity and satisfaction of clients in governmental and private closed arenas. Also the study results showed that, there is a significant difference between the quality of services with fidelity and satisfaction of clients in governmental and private closed arenas, so that the

average variable scores of quality services, fidelity and satisfaction were higher in private clubs than in governmental clubs.

Regarding that, the clients of private athletic clubs have more fidelity and satisfaction than governmental athletic clubs; it would be better that, the authorities more emphasize on sport privatization politics, especially in athletic clubs.

Keywords: Sport Management, Quality of Services, Satisfaction, Fidelity, Closed Arenas

INTRODUCTION

Sport, is one of the basic and important factors of health providing, society vitality and increasing national productivity, so that considering the sport activities play an important role in economic boom of developed societies. According to the importance of mobility and sport activities in daily life and the people of society and also the importance of sport arenas in this context, identifying the important and effective factors in attracting people to sport arenas and studying the important factors of their continuous participation in physical activities, allows us focus on physical activities and sport opportunities. Then, by using different methods of sport marketing, we investigate the special interest and needs of society to recreational sport and physical activities, and provide the places and services for people so they can spend some hours to exercise and do physical activities, away from social and family problems [1].

The quality of services management is one of the new issues in management that has been

noticed in recent decade, so the competition begins among institutes and they study different ways and methods for their revitalization and apply some innovations to attract their customers [11]. The customer satisfaction is the beginning point of a long relationship between the clients and the organization. Today, the customer satisfaction is not enough. The institutes should be assured that, the clients are satisfied and loyal. The researches have shown that, the cost of retaining the old customer is 4 to 6 times less than attracting new customer. Briefly, the implications like the quality of services, satisfaction and the understanding of their relationship are the basics of revitalization and customer retention and as a result, the organizations and institutes gain more profits [12].

Today, the global economy market has changed significantly than before. Throughout the world, commercial organizations try to achieve exclusive profits and places through the Nile more than other

rivals. On the other hand, customer and consumers always look for the suppliers who offer their merchandises and services better. Understanding this distinction, conducts the process of selecting merchandise or required services, and helps the customer to decide to pay more for better services or merchandise [13]. Because of numerous suppliers, who offer their products with almost equal quality, most of customers have various choices in time of buying their required merchandises. This is the reason why they consider other quality indexes of a product than its physical and appearance features [2]. In marketing literature, the experiences of customer satisfaction when they intend shopping, and fidelity have been considered. Also most of experts have noticed that, the customer fidelity depends on the customer satisfaction level. Therefore many studies have achieved the empirical evidences which show that, satisfaction is a leading factor in determining the customer fidelity [12]. The researches have shown that, the cost of retaining the old customer is 4 to 6 times less than attracting new customer. Briefly the implications like the quality of services, fidelity and understanding of their relationship are the basics of revitalization and customer retention, and as a result, the organizations and institutes gain more profits

[3]. In the field of analyzing durable consuming merchandises, the coordinators of selected personal features such as age, income and etc. have effects on the relationship between satisfaction and fidelity. Fidelity is abstractive in presence of satisfaction if may some other obstacles to high level of fidelity exist that, the organization requires to study and overcome them [4].

Pedragosa et al (2009) in his survey showed that, satisfaction is a variable which significantly is related to the club equipment and customer expectations [9]. Howat et al (2013) expressed that, the understanding of the quality of services is the most effective predictor on the customer satisfaction and repurchase in Australia's fitness clubs [10]. Kouzechian et al (2010), Ali Doust et al (2011) and Fesenghori et al (2012) have concluded that, the private clubs compete with other clubs in order to attract more clients and gain more profits, and this competition causes increasing the quality of services in these clubs and consequently causes increasing the client satisfaction [4, 5, 6].

So, the aim of current study was the significant role of sport management in association with the quality of services with satisfaction and fidelity of clients in

governmental and private closed arenas in Shiraz.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

In current study, the relationship between quality of services with fidelity and satisfaction of clients in governmental and private closed arenas in Shiraz has been examined. The statistical society in current study includes all clients of closed arenas in Shiraz (38 private and 18 governmental closed arenas) who had at least 6 months record of using these places. The current study sampling has been determined according to Carejessy Morgan statistical table. So, to be assured of returning distributed questionnaires, 650 questionnaires have been distributed among designated clients; in a way that, 20 clients of every club who had desired conditions were randomly selected as statistical subjects of current study, and finally after deleting corrupted questionnaires, 605 of them were usable and completed. The result of study has been adjusted according to these questionnaires. To collecting data, the PhD thesis questionnaire of Yi Chin Liu (2008) was used. The used questionnaire in this survey includes 58 questions in three parts of demographics, quality of services assessment, satisfaction and fidelity of clients. The importance degree of each

question of this questionnaire has been rated based on Linkret's scale, which includes strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The appearance and content validity of the questionnaire has been conducted consider to the views of 13 sport management specialists. For confirming the tool stability, 40 questionnaires in a preliminary study have been distributed in a governmental and a private club, randomly among the clients of the clubs. The stability has been calculated 0.94 according to Kronbach alpha coefficient.

In order to analyzing data, the methods of descriptive and inferential statistics (the classifications of raw scores, table drawing, frequency distributions and diffusion index calculations such as average and standard deviation, variance and demographical analysis features) were used. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for stability of questionnaire. Also, the data distribution normality has been determined by using Smirnov-Kolmogorov test, and then the Spearman correlation and Mann-Whitney U test were used in a significant level (0.05).

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of Mann-Whitney U test for determining the average ratings of

quality of services, satisfaction and fidelity of clients in governmental and private clubs.

According to above table 1, it seems that, there is a significant difference between the quality of services and also client satisfaction in private and governmental clubs of Shiraz ($P=0.0001$). As we see, the average ratings of quality of services in private clubs (Mean=256.01) is more than the governmental clubs (Mean=187.54), and also the average ratings of client satisfaction in private clubs (Mean=254.54) is more than the governmental clubs (Mean=190.09). So we

concluded that, the quality of services and client satisfaction in private clubs are more than the governmental clubs. Also, there is a significant difference between the quality of services and client fidelity in governmental and private clubs of Shiraz ($P=0.0001$). The average ratings of client fidelity in private clubs (Mean=246.28) was more than the governmental clubs (Mean=204.42), so the quality of services and client fidelity in private clubs is more than the governmental clubs.

Table 1: Average rating of quality of service, customer satisfaction and loyalty in the governmental and private clubs

	Variable	Numbers	Ratings sum	Ratings average	U value	Z	Sig
Quality of services	Private	437	111877.20	256.01	9581	-10.591	0.0001
	Governmental	168	31507.11	187.54			
Satisfaction	Private	437	111235.50	254.54	9242.50	-10.401	0.0001
	Governmental	168	31935	190.09			
Fidelity	Private	437	107624.70	246.28	9203.50	-10.412	0.0001
	Governmental	168	34342.20	204.42			

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of current study showed that, there is a significant and positive relationship between the quality of services, satisfaction and fidelity of clients in governmental and private closed arenas which indicates that, increasing in quality of services in governmental and private closed arenas causes increasing on satisfaction and fidelity of clients. Lin et al (2010) mentioned that, the quality of services in private Gulf clubs for women is more important and significant than men [11]. He considers the attitude and

behavior of staff in attracting customers very effective, that are consistent with the research results of Gohar Rostami (2011) and Ghasem Zadeh (2012) [1,7]. They also concluded that, the manner of behavior and attitude of manager, trainer and staff toward the clients in important in increasing the satisfaction of clients in governmental and private athletic centers; also according to similar research, Howat et al (2013) expressed that, if we want to have satisfied customers, we should consider all aspects of quality of services [10]; because sport services have its

exclusive features and place higher levels of emotional attachment in itself. On the other hand, the services of sport participants (such services which are provided in business-health clubs or university sports clubs) provide various sport experiences which have physical, mental and social profits for the participants. Also regards to this issue that, the needs of sport clients are often different, sophisticated and unpredictable, so the understanding of product and sport services are difficult; as a result of such this consideration, we would have satisfied clients. The results of current study about the relationship between the quality of services and client satisfaction, are consistent with the findings of Howat et al (2013), Lin et al (2010), Ghasem Zadeh (2012) and Gohar Rostami (2011) [1, 7, 10, 11].

Lin et al (2010), considered the mutual respect towards the customers, desirable social atmosphere of club, the quality of services and the proper teaching from trainers to clients, as the most effective factors on client fidelity [11]. Rezaei Kohan et al (2009) in identifying the priority expectations of clients from fitness centers of women in Mashhad, expressed that, the appearance of club, staff, facilities and equipment are very important for the clients [8]. Gohar Rostami et al (2011) has

expressed that, the quality of training plans have high correlation with clients fidelity [1]. So according to study findings, the increasing quality of services seems necessary for the sport clubs which cause that the customer returns to these centers. The current study findings are consistent with the findings of Lin (2010), Gohar Rostami (2009) and Rezaei Kohan (2009), about the relationship between the quality of services and client fidelity [1, 8, 11].

But the research results of Fesenghori et al (2012) are not consistent with the current study findings. Fesenghori in his research expressed that, client's fidelity and satisfaction level of governmental fitness clubs are higher than the private clubs. He expressed the reasons of this difference are such issues like lower fees, special discounts, adequate space and light in the clubs and various equipment in governmental clubs [6]. Therefore, according to obtained results, if the authorities of governmental and private closed arenas in Shiraz want to have satisfied clients, they should improve their quality of services in all dimensions; and according to other research findings, because the clients of clubs are mostly students, it is offered to the clubs managers to schematize their work hours and days in order to provide more possibilities for these people to use the clubs;

and also offered to authorities to more emphasize on politics of sport privatization, especially in sport clubs, and also it would be better that, the clubs use membership cards for their clients.

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