

ABSTRACT

Fitness center is in the Health Care industry that is heavily related to services. These centers need to provide a high quality of services to satisfy the current and new customers in order to complete with other competitors. Nowadays, fitness center industry has become very high competitive, as there is a boom in the Health Care market, people are more concerned with their health. Every fitness center attempts to gain maximum market share and make as much profit as it can in the early stages of growth.

For the life cycle of fitness center industry, it is in the peak stage due to the high demand of the services and many new comers have entered into the market in the same and different forms, but they all have the same goal to provide the fitness or physical activities services. In addition, the competition among fitness centers is high, but the products and services are quite the same, so that fitness centers always try to compete with each other on services.

In Thailand, there are 2-3 famous fitness centers which are branches of the western center such as California's Fitness Center, Clark Hatch Fitness Center. The others are originated in Thailand and located in the famous hotels. In this study, the researcher chose "The Clark Hatch Fitness Center at Silom Road branch" that is located in the huge business area of "Silom Road"

The objectives of this study were to identify the SERVQUAL dimensions that customers, both local and foreign, use to evaluate The Clark Hatch Fitness Center, to study the customer expectations towards the services quality that should be provided by The Clark Hatch Fitness Center, and to evaluate the perceptions of service quality that customers obtain after using the services provided by The Clark Hatch Fitness Center.

In this research, questionnaires were used as a tool for collecting the primary data employing the survey research. There were 277 sets of questionnaires completed in this comprehensive study. Questionnaires were completed by the target population (Thai and foreign members of The Clark Hatch Fitness Center at Silom Road branch).

The study applied two-tailed paired sample t-tests and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine the difference between customer expectations and perceptions of service quality.

As a result of the findings, the researcher concludes that gaps between expectations and perceptions of The Clark Hatch Fitness Center do exist in terms of the 5 SERVQUAL dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Whereas the demographic characteristics that consisted of age, gender, occupation, and education level, showed a very slight relationship with the size of the gap, the income level and occupation seem to be important values that affect the gap scores.

