

**Customer expectations and satisfaction with fitness facilities  
in the North West Province**

by

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# ABSTRACT

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One of the major challenges facing service businesses today is the rapidly changing and highly competitive nature of service industries. As a result, customer expectations are also rising quickly. Increased competition in this regard has resulted in fitness facilities in particular aiming to improve their services in order for these businesses to differentiate themselves from their competitors. By improving their services, fitness facilities can better satisfy the needs of their members. Therefore, fitness facilities need to identify those service elements which are important to their members in order to satisfy members' service needs by improving the quality of services delivered.

The primary objective of the study is to determine whether customers of fitness facilities in the North West Province are satisfied with the services that are provided by these facilities. The research study on fitness facilities was based on descriptive research in order to allow for the identification of service elements that are important to members of fitness facilities. During the course of the study, secondary data was used for the literature review in order to investigate the research problem through the use of publications such as books and reliable academic and research articles. A quantitative research design was used in the form of self-administered questionnaires with a view to determine the level of customer satisfaction as well as the desires, perceptions and expectations of members regarding fitness facilities. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was also performed during this study to ensure that the collection and analysis of data would proceed as smoothly as possible.

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to members of fitness facilities from the 17<sup>th</sup> of May to the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2010 by three fieldworkers in the cities of Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp in the North West Province. A convenience sampling method was used, which implied that respondents who were readily available and willing to complete the questionnaire at selected fitness facilities were selected for participation in the study. Furthermore, an exploratory factor analysis was used to

identify those service elements which are important to members of fitness facilities. Ten factors were identified, namely personnel professionalism, equipment condition, membership possibilities, fitness programmes, convenience issues, medical assistance, cleanliness, information availability, membership preferences and the opportunity to exercise in another town.

The results indicated that differences exist in terms of respondents' gender, levels of education as well as differences between various age groups and the ten identified importance factors. Results also showed that customer satisfaction can influence customer behaviour, as satisfied customers would recommend the fitness facility to others and want to have a long-term relationship with the fitness facility.

It is recommended that fitness facilities need to focus on those service elements that members view as important when planning and maintaining their service offerings. Furthermore, fitness facilities need to realise that all their members do not view the importance of service elements in the same way, and therefore they should deliver services specifically tailored to various age groups, levels of education and gender.

Recommendations for future research include that a similar study can be conducted for individual fitness facilities, because fitness facilities are unique and have different capabilities to deliver services. When conducting a study for each individual fitness facility, a relevant comparison can be made between the services that the specific fitness facility offers and what the members of that fitness facility really want or view as important. Specific strategies can then be recommended to the individual fitness facility with a view to improve their service offering and concomitantly increase their member satisfaction.

# UITTREKSEL

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Een van die grootste uitdagings wat diensondernemings vandag in die gesig staar, is die snelveranderende en hoogs mededingende aard van diensbedrywe. 'n Gevolg hiervan is verhoogde kliënteverwagtinge. Hoër mededingingsvlakke het daartoe gelei dat fiksheidsfasiliteite hulself spesifiek ten doel stel om dienslewering te verbeter met die oog daarop om hulself van hul mededingers te differensieer. Deur dienste te verbeter kan die fiksheidsfasiliteite verder ook hul lede se tevredenheid met dienste verhoog. Gevolglik moet fiksheidsfasiliteite daardie dienselemente identifiseer wat vir lede belangrik is, met die doel om lede se diensbehoefte te bevredig deur die kwaliteit van dienste wat hulle lewer te verhoog.

Die primêre doelwit van die studie is om te bepaal of kliënte van die fiksheidsfasiliteite in die Noordwes-Provinsie tevrede is met die diens wat gebied word by hierdie fasiliteite. Die navorsingstudie oor die fiksheidsfasiliteite was gebaseer op beskrywende navorsing, wat die identifisering van daardie dienselemente wat belangrik is vir lede van fiksheidsfasiliteite moontlik gemaak het. Sekondêre data is gebruik, spesifiek vir die literatuuoroorsig, om deur die gebruik van publikasies soos boeke en betroubare akademiese en navorsingsartikels 'n ondersoek te loods oor die navorsingsprobleem. 'n Kwantitatiewe navorsingsontwerp is gebruik in die vorm van 'n self-gedadministreerde vraelys wat daarop gemik was om kliëntetevredenheid te bepaal, tesame met hul begeertes, persepsies en verwagtinge met betrekking tot fiksheidsfasiliteite. Voortoetsing van die vraelys is ook uitgevoer tydens die studie om te verseker dat die insameling en ontleding van data so glad moontlik kon verloop.

Self-gedadministreerde vraelyste is versprei deur drie veldwerkers aan lede van fiksheidsfasiliteite in Potchefstroom en Klerksdorp in die Noordwes-Provinsie vanaf 17 Mei tot 26 Mei 2010. 'n Gerieflikheidsteekproefmetode is gebruik, wat behels dat respondente wat beskikbaar en gewillig was om die vraelys by die geselekteerde fiksheidsfasiliteite te voltooi gekies is om deel te neem aan die studie. Verder is 'n

eksploratiewe faktoranalise gebruik om daardie dienselemente te identifiseer wat belangrik is vir die lede van fiksheidsfasiliteite. Tien faktore is geïdentifiseer, naamlik die professionaliteit van personeel, toestand van toerusting, lidmaatskapmoontlikhede, fiksheids-programme, aangeleenthede rondom gerieflikheid, mediese bystand, sindelikheid, die beskikbaarheid van inligting, lidmaatskapvoorkeure asook die geleentheid om in ander dorpe te oefen.

Die resultate het gedui daarop dat verskille bestaan met betrekking tot die belangrike faktore ten opsigte van respondente se geslag en vlakke van opleiding, sowel as met betrekking tot verskillende ouderdomsgroepe. Die resultate het ook gedui daarop dat kliëntetevredenheid die kliënte se gedrag beïnvloed deurdat tevrede kliënte die fiksheidsfasiliteit sal aanbeveel aan ander individue, en dat hulle langtermynverhoudinge met die fiksheidsfasiliteit wil hê.

Daar word gevolglik aanbeveel dat fiksheidsfasiliteite moet fokus op daardie dienselemente wat lede as belangrik beskou wanneer diensaanbiedinge beplan en onderhou word. Verder moet fiksheidsfasiliteite besef dat al hul lede nie die belangrikheid van dienselemente op dieselfde manier beskou nie; gevolglik moet dienste gebied word wat spesifiek gerig is op verskillende geslagte, ouderdomsgroepe en vlakke van opleiding.

Aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing sluit in dat 'n soortgelyke studie onderneem kan word ten opsigte van individuele fasiliteite omdat fiksheidsfasiliteite uniek is en verskillende vermoëns het om dienste aan te bied. Deur 'n studie uit te voer vir elke individuele fiksheidsfasiliteit sal dit moontlik wees om relevante vergelykings te tref tussen die dienste wat fiksheidsfasiliteite reeds bied, en wat lede van fiksheidsfasiliteite wil hê of as belangrik beskou. Spesifieke strategieë kan dan aanbeveel word aan die individuele fiksheidsfasiliteite om hul diensaanbieding te verbeter en om sodoende hulle lede se tevredenheid te verhoog.

# LIST OF KEY TERMS

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- Customer expectations (*defined in paragraph 1.3.2*)
- Customer satisfaction (*defined in paragraph 1.3.3; paragraph 3.3.1*)
- Health and fitness industry (*defined in paragraph 1.3.4*)
- Services marketing (*defined in paragraph 2.2.3*)
- Customer loyalty (*defined in paragraph 3.9.1*)
- Relationship marketing (*defined in paragraph 3.2.2*)

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# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

---

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of Chapter 1 is to provide a background to the study. Specifically, the chapter sets out to:

- Explain the problem on which the study is based;
- Describe the main constructs that will be used for this study, namely customer expectations, customer satisfaction and the fitness industry;
- Describe the context in which the South African health and fitness industry operates;
- Present the primary and secondary objectives of the study;
- Briefly explain the research methodology used to reach the objectives, and
- Provide an overview of the structure and chapters of this study.

### 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The health and fitness industry, as described by Oliver (2003:337), has enjoyed significant expansion, as a result of more adults taking out fitness facility membership. According to Oliver (2003:337), new entrants into the health and fitness industry lead to a near-saturated market and intensified competition because of the growth experienced by the industry.

Ziethaml *et al.* (2009:96) suggest that one of the most significant challenges facing service businesses today is the rapidly changing and highly competitive service

industry, and as a result customer expectations are also rising quickly. According to Tsitskari *et al.* (2006:623), increased competition has led businesses to improve their services in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Afthinos *et al.* (2005:246) further emphasise the importance of delivering excellent customer service; the authors suggest that quality service is important in a highly competitive service environment. Furthermore, these authors argue that a satisfied customer is more likely to continue buying services, engage in positive word-of-mouth and increase customer loyalty. Satisfaction with services results from how well the service matches the customer's expectations and perceptions (Ojasalo, 2001:200).

The nature of services revolves around the characteristics of intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability. These characteristics differentiate services marketing from the marketing of physical goods (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2007:310). According to Du Plessis *et al.* (2007:309), the service sector in South Africa encompasses a variety of businesses, services and activities, including the fitness industry. Afthinos *et al.* (2005:246) describe the health and fitness industry as a rapidly growing industry worldwide. Oliver (2003:337) explains that the expansion of the health and fitness industry has resulted in a near-saturated market which leads to greater competition in this industry.

The health and fitness industry is a competitive industry that has forced managers to focus on customer service in order to meet their customers' high expectations (Robinson, 1999:211). Afthinos *et al.* (2005:246) emphasise the importance of delivering excellent service as quality service is a prerequisite in this highly competitive service environment. Kim and Kim (1998:273) highlight the importance of meeting the expectations of members in fitness facilities in order to attract new members and also to retain current members. According to these authors, fitness facilities should identify the distinct groups of members that make use of their fitness facility and develop products and services tailored to their unique needs.

Afthinos *et al.* (2005:246) emphasise that quality service is important in a highly competitive service environment. The quality of services delivered will have a substantial influence on how customers' service expectations are met. Kandampully (1998:432) explains that customer satisfaction and perceived service quality are among the most dominant themes of research in services; these constructs are commonly based on the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm. According to this paradigm, customers compare the quality of service experienced with their prior expectations. This comparison then leads to an emotional reaction that is manifested in the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services purchased. In this regard, Ojasalo (2001:200) describes that perceived service quality and satisfaction with services result from how well the actual service performance matches or exceeds the customer's expectations. Blackwell *et al.* (2006:742) further explain that customer satisfaction is a positive post-purchase assessment where customers' expectations were met or exceeded.

According to research conducted by Garbarino and Johnson (1999:72), Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cho and Everitt Byant (1996:8-9), Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:44), Olsen, Teare and Gummesson (1996:166), Dimitriades (2006:782-783), Guenzi and Pelloni (2004:368) and Kau and Loh (2006:102), the satisfaction levels that customers experience with various service elements (which include services and products delivered, service customisation, service quality, price, store environment and employees), need to be determined as all of these elements have an impact on the satisfaction levels of customers.

Understanding how customers perceive services will help marketers to develop strategies aimed at an increased market share, and concomitantly aimed at satisfying customer needs more effectively (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2007:177). Customer perception is the process through which an individual observes, selects, organises and reacts to environmental stimuli in a meaningful way (Jauhari & Dutta, 2009:179), while expectations are beliefs about how a service will perform; these can be described as desired service outcomes (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2007:159).

Results of research conducted on the healthy lifestyle customer by Divine and Lepisto (2005:275) indicate that people who maintain a healthy lifestyle tend to be female. According to a study by Afthinos *et al.* (2005:251), significant differences exist between males and females with regard to their expectations of service quality within the health and fitness industry. Women have specific needs: they tend to desire a fitness facility equipped with a great deal of available space, a convenient schedule, a variety of sports, programmes differentiated in terms of play or goal attainment, a comprehensive brochure and convenient access. The aforementioned study found that men, on the other hand, desire the provision of membership packages, the opportunity to meet other people, being able to bring guests, and the provision of snacks (Afthinos *et al.*, 2005:251). Differences between male and female members include perceptions regarding the provision of snacks, grooming facilities, programmes for children and the interest of employees of fitness facilities in progress, staff courtesy, as well as the professional knowledge of employees in fitness facilities.

Furthermore, Afthinos *et al.* (2005:255) explain that women have higher expectations of service quality than men. According to Draper *et al.* (2006:93), not enough research has been conducted within the South African fitness industry; therefore, information concerning fitness facilities within communities is limited. Draper *et al.* (2006:94) also emphasise the importance of assessing the extent to which the needs of South Africans are being met, or can be met by the health and fitness industry.

Since a lack of research exists within the South African health and fitness industry concerning customer satisfaction, perceptions, expectations, desires, attitudes, intentions and preferences of members of fitness facilities, a shortage of information concurrently exists regarding the satisfaction of members with services in this specific industry.

This study therefore sets out to provide information to fitness facilities that specifically cater for the requirements of their members concerning fitness services, and in this

manner the current study attempts to provide fitness facilities with a better understanding of their target market. The results of this study will also assist fitness facilities towards developing improved marketing strategies specifically aimed at the needs and desires of both male and female members in order to gain a competitive advantage. This advantage will result from the satisfaction of the different expectations experienced by male and female members with regard to the quality of service the facility offers. This information is important to fitness facilities as these facilities must ensure that they have the necessary equipment and programme arrangements to deliver quality services to both men and women, by understanding the different perceptions, expectations and needs with regard to fitness facilities as these are found between the different genders.

The aim of this study is to determine if customers of fitness facilities in the North West Province are satisfied by the services that are provided by these facilities. In order to pursue this aim it is necessary to first define the concepts of customer expectations, customer satisfaction as well as the health and fitness industry, as these concepts will be used throughout the study.

### **1.3 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

The following concepts will be used throughout this study. The definitions that will be stated were compiled from the discussion in the following chapters.

#### **1.3.1 Services**

Services are identifiable, intangible and perishable economic activities, efforts, deeds, processes and performances aimed at creating customer satisfaction by creating value and providing benefits for the customer by offering solutions to customer problems, but which do not lead to material ownership. Refer to paragraph 2.2.1 (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:57; Etzel *et al.*, 2007:286; Kotler & Armstrong, 2008:218; Wilson *et al.*, 2008:5; Lovelock and Wirtz, 2001:9; Grönroos, 2004:46).

### **1.3.2 Customer expectations**

Customer expectations can be defined as beliefs about how a product or service will perform; this concept is also described as the desired product and service outcomes (Du Plessis *et al.* 2007:159).

### **1.3.3 Customer satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction refers to a post-purchase assessment where customers compare their expectations to their perceptions with regard to the service encounter. Satisfaction refers to a situation where the customer's expectations were met or exceeded. Refer to paragraph 3.3.1 (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:9; Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:369; Javadein *et al.*, 2008:3; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:742).

### **1.3.4 Health and Fitness industry**

The Health and fitness industry is defined by the European Network of Sport Science, Education and Employment (2006) as an industry that is collectively concerned about the activities, behaviours or policies of clients in order to maintain and promote the health, physical fitness and well-being of these particular clients within the health and fitness industry.

## **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The following primary and secondary objectives were set for this study:

### **1.4.1 Primary objective**

The primary objective of the study is to investigate the satisfaction of members of fitness facilities with services delivered, through the identification of service elements which are

important to these members and a comparison of these elements to the levels of satisfaction members have experienced.

#### **1.4.2 Secondary objectives**

The secondary objectives of this study will be to:

- identify service elements which are important to customers of fitness facilities and which can influence customer satisfaction with the fitness facility.
- identify whether customers of fitness facilities view service elements differently.
- determine the actual level of member satisfaction with the quality of fitness services.
- determine how customer satisfaction will influence customer behaviour.
- determine whether a difference exists between the importance of the service elements and the levels of satisfaction
- provide fitness facilities in the North West Province of South Africa with guidelines to improve customer satisfaction.

### **1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research method will be discussed according to the literature study and the proposed empirical survey that was performed during this study.

#### **1.5.1 Literature study**

A variety of sources was used during this study; these include scientific journals, articles, books and research documents. The keywords used to search for relevant articles and documentation are customer satisfaction, service quality, customer perceptions and expectations, as well as health and fitness industry.

The sources that were used are generally published between 1998 and 2010. The databases that was be used include Ebscohost, Emerald, Google Scholar as well as SaCat.

### **1.5.2 Empirical survey**

The empirical investigation will be discussed according to the research design and the method of data collection, the development of the sample plan, the research instrument, the pilot study and data analysis. Chapter five presents a more detailed explanation of the information presented in this section.

### **1.5.3 Research design and method of collecting data**

Hair *et al.* (2006:63) indicate that descriptive research creates data structures that explain the existing characters of a defined target group – such as attitudes, intentions, preferences, purchase behaviours and evaluations of current marketing mix strategies. For this reason, the current study was based on descriptive research in order to allow for the identification of both male and female members' desires, perceptions and expectations regarding services within fitness facilities.

A quantitative research design was used for this study, in the form of self-administered questionnaires that aimed to determine levels of customer satisfaction as well as the desires, perceptions and expectations of members regarding fitness facilities. Tustin *et al.* (2005:413) explain that pre-testing should be undertaken to ensure that the data collected will be as relevant and accurate as possible. Pre-testing the questionnaire used for this study was performed with a view to ensure that the collection and analysis of data will proceed as smoothly as possible.



#### **1.5.4 Development of the sample plan**

The development of the sample plan will be explained by first defining the population and the sampling framework.

##### **1.5.4.1 Define the population**

The population is defined as the group from which the sample will be drawn and includes all the people whose opinions, behaviours, preferences and attitudes will provide the required research information (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:96).

For this study, the population consists of the main fitness facilities within the North West Province of South Africa and includes both male and female members of these facilities who are 18 years and older, as this is the predominant age of members within fitness facilities. The towns of the North West Province that were included in the study are Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom. These towns were chosen because of the availability of fitness facilities in these regions.

##### **1.5.4.2 Sampling framework**

A non-probability sampling method was used to select members from the described population, because customer lists are confidential in fitness facilities and are therefore rarely distributed to outsiders. Tustin *et al.* (2005:346) explain that convenience sampling is useful in the exploratory phase of a research project, and that members are chosen on the basis of being readily available and accessible. Convenience sampling was used in the form of an intercept survey since this allowed the acquisition of information from both men and women of various age groups who are currently training at selected fitness facilities. This will allow the gathering of the most current and accurate information regarding their levels of satisfaction, desires, perceptions and expectations regarding the participating fitness facilities.

The self-administrated questionnaires were distributed on various days and times to allow for the greater differentiation of suitable participants to participate in the study. This also means that members of various age groups and motivations participated in the study, which could possibly lead to greater variations in the levels of satisfaction experienced.

#### **1.5.4.3 Development of the questionnaire**

This study made use of a structured questionnaire in order to obtain the necessary information about the levels of satisfaction experienced by members as well as the desires, perceptions and expectations related to fitness facilities that men and women experience. Because of the fact that information on personal perceptions and expectations was needed for the study, the questionnaire was anonymous. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was also done to ensure that the data collection and analysis took place as efficiently as possible.

Pre-testing involved the distribution of twenty questionnaires to members within the selected regions, who were requested to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback on the clarity of the questions and also the service elements they view as important. This was done with a view to ensure a complete list of service elements; the pre-test also ensured that the questions in the questionnaire were fully understood in order to facilitate effective data collection.

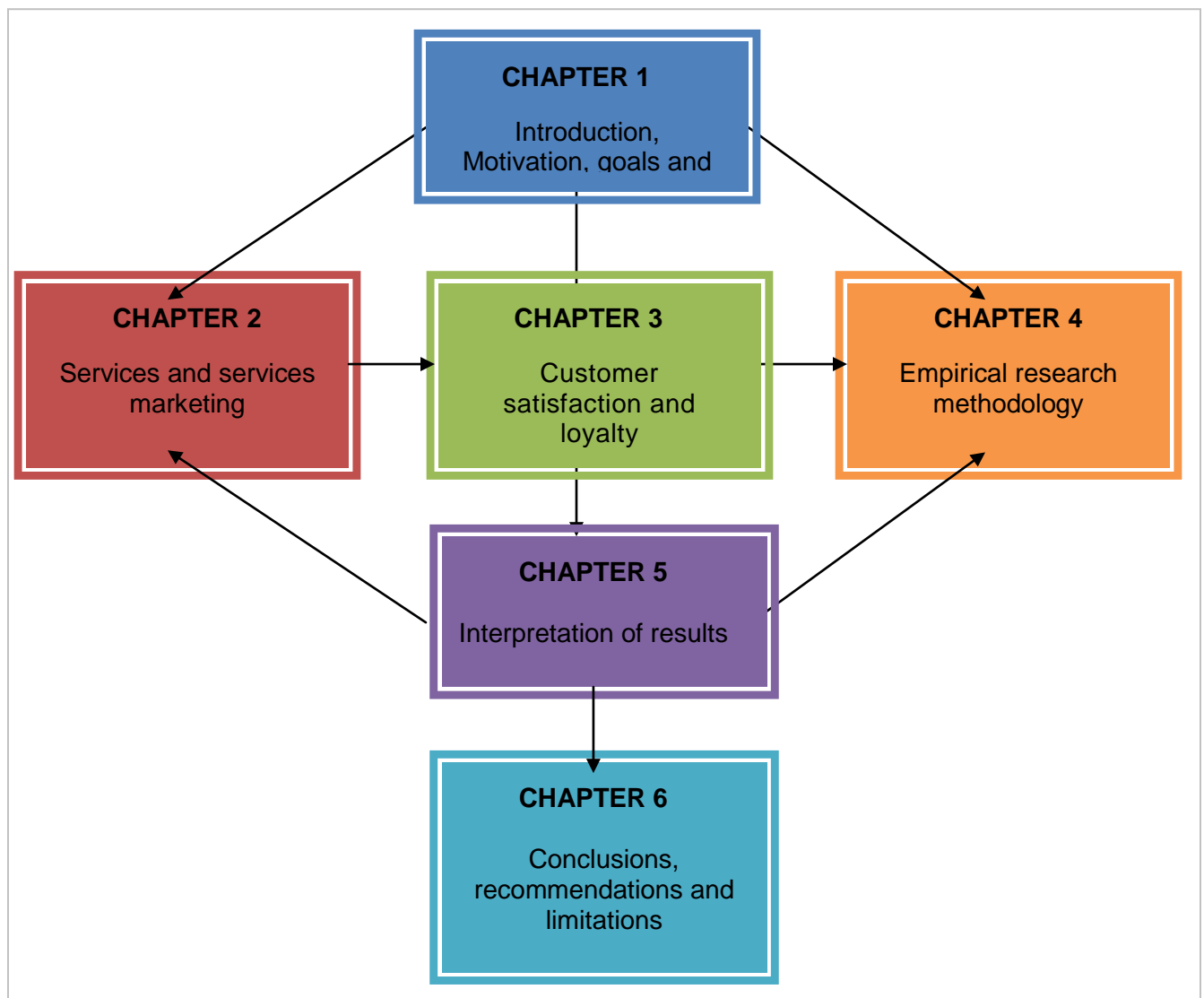
#### **1.5.4.4 Data analysis**

Data of this research study was analysed once obtained through the structured self-administrated questionnaires. The statistical analysis and data analysis was conducted through the SAS statistical program.

## 1.6 CHAPTER LAYOUT

As indicated in figure 1.1 the study is divided into six chapters. Chapters two and three consist of a literature study on services and services marketing and customer satisfaction and loyalty. The empirical research methodology is presented in chapter four with the interpretation of results in chapter five, and lastly the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study will be discussed in chapter six.

**Figure 1.1: Chapter layout**



# CHAPTER 2

## SERVICES AND SERVICES MARKETING

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### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Services include a wide range of industries such as hotels, entertainment, transportation, information, leisure, plumbing, after-sales services and professional services (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:6). According to Du Plessis *et al.* (2007:309), the service sector in South Africa encompasses a large variety of businesses, services and activities, which among others include the fitness industry.

Services marketing was not even considered as an academic field until the 1970s when research toward accumulating services marketing knowledge was slowly beginning to expand. The first international conference on services marketing was held in the United States twelve years later in 1982 (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:27). One of the most significant reasons why the field of services marketing was slow to develop within the academic sphere was because many marketing educators felt that the marketing of services was not considerably different from the marketing of goods (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:27). Etzel *et al.* (2007:286) confirm that fundamental differences exist between the marketing of services and goods; they explain that the development of effective service offerings can only be achieved by means of a proper understanding of these differences and implications.

The scope of services marketing is substantial; about 50% of what customers spend goes towards services purchased from businesses; services therefore represent a major segment of the economy (Etzel *et al.*, 2007:305).

This chapter explains the notion of services marketing by exploring the difference between the marketing of goods and services, the problems that exist in the field of

services marketing, the possible solutions for service marketing problems, the management of customers, the various types of services, the customer purchase process and decision-making process, as well as the importance of customer perceptions and expectations in customer satisfaction with services.

## 2.2. DEFINITIONS FOR CONCEPTS IN THIS CHAPTER

Various concepts including services, marketing and services marketing used in this chapter will be defined.

### 2.2.1. Services

Service marketing literature includes numerous definitions of services but a number of universal features can be identified from these definitions (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:57).

Services is defined by Etzel *et al.* (2007:286) as identifiable, intangible activities that are the main object of a transaction designed to provide want-satisfaction to customers. Kotler and Armstrong (2008:218) add that a service is any activity or benefit that a business can offer customers which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything.

Wilson *et al.* (2008:5) define services as deeds, processes and performances while Kasper *et al.* (2006:57) define services as deeds, processes and efforts.

Lovelock and Wirtz (2001:9), on the other hand, define services as an economic activity that creates value and provides benefits for customers at specific times and places by bringing about a desired change in, or on behalf of the recipient of the service.

A service can also be defined as a process that consists of a series of intangible activities that normally take place during an interaction between the customer and

service employees and which are provided as solutions to customer problems (Grönroos, 2004:46).

Kasper *et al.* (2006:57) integrate the elements of the definitions provided above by indicating that services take place in an interactive process aimed at creating customer satisfaction; the authors' state that services are intangible and perishable activities which do not always lead to material ownership.

**From the above definitions services can be defined as identifiable, intangible and perishable economic activities, efforts, deeds, processes and performances which do not lead to material ownership and which are aimed at creating customer satisfaction by creating value and providing benefits to the customer by offering solutions to customer problems.**

### 2.2.2. Marketing

The literature on marketing reveals various definitions on this concept.

Marketing is defined by Kurtz and Boone (2006:7) as, “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods, services, businesses and events to create and maintain relationships that will satisfy individual and business objectives”.

Kotler and Armstrong (2008:5) add to this definition by stating that marketing is a social and managerial process, where individuals and businesses obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others. Kasper *et al.* (2006:76) further define marketing as a set of processes aimed at creating, communicating, delivering value to customers and which are used managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the business and its shareholders.

**From the definitions provided above, marketing can be defined as a social and managerial set of processes concerned with the creation, communication and delivery of value to customers, as well as the creation, maintenance and management of customer relationships by means of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services with the aim of satisfying customer and business objectives.**

### **2.2.3. Services marketing**

Services marketing focuses on meeting the needs of customers as well as employees more successfully than the competitors in order to establish value to all the stakeholders (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:6).

**With reference to the definitions of services and marketing it is possible to define services marketing as the planning and execution of the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of services aimed at creating customer satisfaction by creating value to the customer through offering service solutions to customer problems and is concerned with the creation, maintenance and management of customer relationships to ensure the service business objectives are met.**

From the definitions of services, marketing and services marketing, it is clear that several differences exist between the marketing of services and goods. The next section will provide an explanation of these important differences.

## **2.3. BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS AND SERVICES**

The service environment today makes it essential for effective marketing to take place, which includes effective competition in the evolving and challenging environment that characterises today's marketplace (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:8). It is therefore important for businesses to monitor what competitors are doing and to have clear strategies in order to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage.

Today, many businesses are choosing not to compete head-to-head against their competitors. As an alternative, they are rather positioning their services to appeal to specific market segments. Afthinos *et al.* (2005:246) emphasise that quality service is important in this highly competitive service environment.

Services marketing management differs from the manufacturing sector in several important respects (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:9). Table 2.1 lists nine basic differences that distinguish tasks associated with the marketing of services.

**Table: 2.1: The basic differences between goods and services**

<b>BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS AND SERVICES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Customers do not obtain ownership of services.</b></li><li>○ <b>Service products are ephemeral and cannot be inventoried.</b></li><li>○ <b>Intangible elements dominate value creation.</b></li><li>○ <b>Customers may be involved in the production process.</b></li><li>○ <b>Other people may form part of the product.</b></li><li>○ <b>There is greater variability in operational inputs and outputs.</b></li><li>○ <b>Many services are difficult for customers to evaluate.</b></li><li>○ <b>The time factor assumes great importance.</b></li><li>○ <b>Distribution channels take different forms.</b></li></ul>

**Source: Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:9).**

These aspects will now be explored further.

- **Customers do not obtain ownership of services.**  
Customers obtain value from services without the transfer of ownership of any tangible elements (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2008:21).
- **Service products are short-lived and cannot be stocked.**



Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2008:18) indicate that services are created and consumed simultaneously, which makes it impossible to stock services. Service marketers need to find ways of smoothing demand levels with a view to match capacity through price incentives and promotions, as well as opportunity identification aimed at shrinking a businesses' productive capacity to match predicted fluctuations in demand (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:10).

- **Intangible elements dominate value creation.**

Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2008:20) explain that the intangible nature of services presents problems for customers, because customers are forced to rely on the reputation of the service business to evaluate the presented value. Marketers can utilise physical images and metaphors to demonstrate the competencies of the service business with a view to demonstrate the benefits resulting from service delivery (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:10).

- **Customers may be involved in the production process.**

Many services require customers to participate in creating the service product and in this way to form part of self-service of the business. Customers can be considered, according to Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:11), as partial employees – which means a service business has a great deal to gain from making customers more knowledgeable and productive.

- **Other people may form part of the product.**

Hoffman *et al.* (2006:28) explain that an interconnection exists among the service provider, the customer and other customers sharing the service experience. The quality of employees who serve the customers often differentiates one service from another, and this means that a service business should devote special care to selecting, training and motivating employees who serve customers directly (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:12).

- **Greater variability in operational inputs and outputs.**

According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:12), the presence of employees and other customers in the operation system makes it difficult to standardise and control quality in both service inputs and outputs. Hoffman *et al.* (2006:40) add that, because of the human factor in service production and delivery, each component of the provided service is different to some extent.

- **Many services are difficult for customers to evaluate.**

According to Wilson *et al.* (2008:16), customers find it hard to evaluate services because services cannot be seen, felt, tasted or touched. Service marketers can, however, reduce customers' perceived risk before a service purchase by helping them to match their needs to specific service features (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:12).

- **The time factor is of great importance.**

During a service encounter, personal contact takes place in real time where certain activities should be carried out by both the customer and employee (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:58). Service marketers need to understand customers' time constraints and priorities as these fluctuate from one market segment to another; customers will pay more for faster service because they place great value on their time (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:13).

- **Distribution channels take different forms.**

Service businesses use a single location or electronic means to distribute their services (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:13). Service businesses should therefore recognise that as a result of these differences, customers should be approached and managed differently in order to communicate more effectively with the target customers and to satisfy their service needs successfully.

The next section provides an overview of those aspects that service businesses should consider when planning their marketing efforts, by specifically exploring the services marketing mix.

## 2.4. THE SERVICES MARKETING MIX

The marketing mix is a set of controllable, tactical marketing tools that a business combines to create the desired response within the target market (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008:50). The marketing mix is one of the most fundamental concepts of marketing and is defined by Wilson *et al.* (2008:20) as those elements that can be used to satisfy or communicate with customers and which are controlled by the business.

The implementation of a service experience is performed with a range of instruments within the marketing mix (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:465). Traditionally, the marketing mix consisted of the so-called four P's, namely product, place, price and promotion (Grönroos, 2004:240), but research has increasingly found that this mix is too restrictive to describe the nature of services. Therefore, more marketing variables have been suggested. According to Grönroos (2004:241), the shortcomings of the traditional marketing mix become unmistakably clear in circumstances where service competition dominates. Wilson *et al.* (2008:20) further explain that service marketers have adopted the concept of an expanded marketing mix for services because of the importance of these additional marketing variables.

The additional marketing variables as described by Kasper *et al.* (2006:465) consist of people (personnel), physical evidence and process; these can be combined with the traditional marketing mix to form the seven P's of marketing (see Table 2.2).

### 2.4.1. Product

Kotler and Armstrong. (2008:50) explain that the product element implies the arrangement of goods and services presented to the target market by the business. The product area of the marketing mix is concerned with the development of the right product or service targeted at satisfying the customers' needs (Perreault *et al.*, 2008:36).

**Table 2.2: Expanded service marketing mix**

<b>PRODUCT</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>PROMOTION</b>	<b>PRICE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical goods features</li> <li>• Quality level</li> <li>• Accessories</li> <li>• Packaging</li> <li>• Warranties</li> <li>• Product lines</li> <li>• Branding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Channel type</li> <li>• Exposure</li> <li>• Intermediaries</li> <li>• Outlet locations</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Storage</li> <li>• Managing channels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Promotion blend</li> <li>•Salespeople Selection</li> <li>Training Incentives</li> <li>•Advertising Media types</li> <li>Types of ads</li> <li>•Sales promotion</li> <li>•Publicity</li> <li>• Internet strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Price level</li> <li>• Terms</li> <li>• Differentiation</li> <li>• Discounts</li> <li>• Allowances</li> </ul>
<b>PEOPLE (Personnel)</b>	<b>PHYSICAL EVIDENCE</b>		<b>PROCESS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Employees Recruiting</li> <li>Training</li> <li>Motivation</li> <li>Rewards</li> <li>Teamwork</li> <li>•Customers Education</li> <li>Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility design</li> <li>• Equipment</li> <li>• Signage</li> <li>• Employee dress</li> <li>• Other tangibles</li> <li>Reports</li> <li>Business cards</li> <li>• Statements</li> <li>• Guarantees</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Flow of activities</li> <li>Standardised</li> <li>Customised</li> <li>•Number of steps</li> <li>Simple</li> <li>Complex</li> <li>•Customer involvement</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Wilson *et al.* (2008:20)

### 2.4.2. Place

The place element includes all those business activities concerned with making the product or service available to customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008:50). According to Hoffman *et al.* (2009:282), the service business's location or place depends on the level of customer involvement that is required to produce the service; for example, low-contact customer services should be located in remote sites that are less expensive.

According to Perreault *et al.* (2008:37), the notion of place within the marketing mix is concerned with all those decisions involved in getting the right product or service to the target market where it is readily available when and where it is needed. The location of the service business and the physical surroundings play an important role in the customers' assessment of the service (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:408).

Three questions should be answered by service businesses who are determining the location of their services, according to Hoffman *et al.* (2009:283). These include how visible the service business is, the suitable size of the site and size of buildings planned, and lastly whether the site will be convenient for customers.

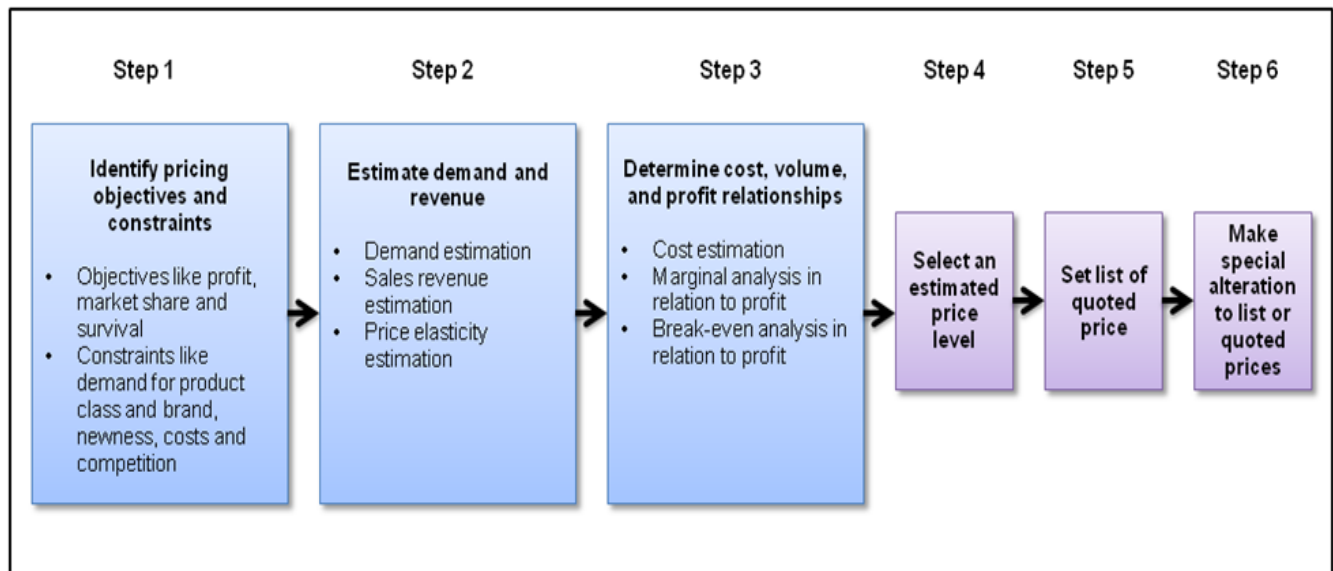
### 2.4.3. Price

Price is an important marketing mix tool that service businesses use to deliver external value (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:469). Kerin, Harley and Rudelius (2009:331) explain that price is the exchange of money for ownership or use of a service; it constitutes an important decision as it has a direct influence on the business's profit.

According to Pearrealult *et al.* (2008:38), the kind of competition in the target market and the cost of the entire marketing mix must be considered along with the customers' estimated response to the possible prices; this would ensure that customers will accept the price.

The importance of price in the marketing mix requires an understanding of six steps through which businesses proceed when making price decisions, as shown in Figure 2.1 (Kerin *et al.*, 2009:333).

**Figure 2.1: The six steps in setting price**



**Source: Kerin, Harley and Rudelius (2009:333)**

#### 2.4.4. Promotion

The promotion element of the marketing mix focuses on acquiring new customers or maintaining current customers through the use of promotional activities which communicate the value of the product or service to the customers (Perreault *et al.*, 2008:37). In simple terms, such promotional activities communicate the value and quality of the product or service and persuade customers to make the purchase (Kotler & Armstrong., 2008:51).

#### 2.4.5. People

The people variable of the marketing mix is described by Wilson *et al.* (2008:21) as all human actors who play a part in service delivery and who can consequently influence

the buyers' (customers') perceptions. People in this sense include the personnel as well as other customers in the service environment.

#### **2.4.6. Physical evidence**

Since services are intangible, the physical environment outside and inside the service outlet is substantially influential in communicating an image and in shaping customer expectations (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:468). Wilson *et al.* (2008:21) describe this marketing variable as the environment in which the service is delivered and where the business and customer interact.

Hoffman *et al.* (2009:29) further propose that the physical evidence of the service marketing mix includes physical characteristics such as the quality of furniture, the appearance of personnel and the quality of the information sheet; all those aspects that surround a service and assist consumers in making service evaluations.

#### **2.4.7. Process**

Wilson *et al.* (2008:21) define the process variable as the actual procedures, mechanisms and flow of activities by which the service is delivered, including service delivery and operating systems. Kasper *et al.* (2006:467) emphasise the importance of a planned service delivery process, since this might influence the productivity and quality of service delivery as a result of the required interaction with the customer.

An effective marketing programme blends all of the above-mentioned marketing mix elements into an integrated marketing programme designed to reach the business's marketing objectives through value delivery to customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008:51).

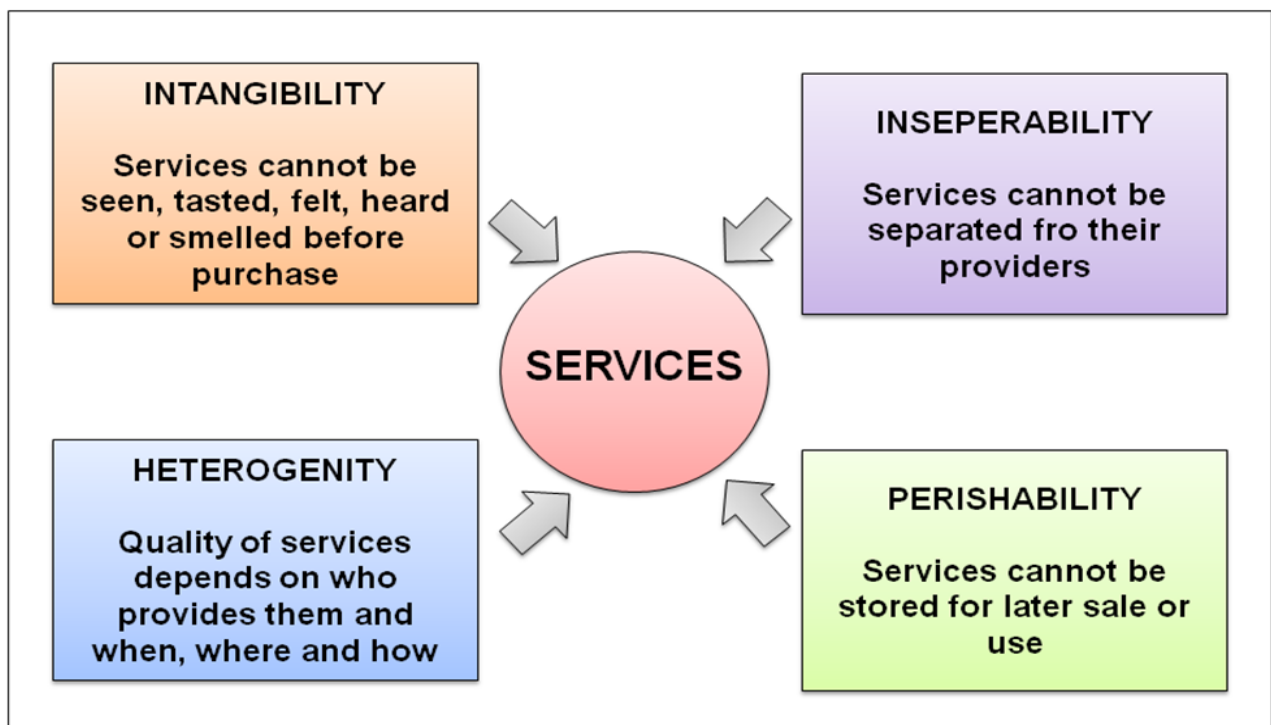
In order to create value services for customers, the characteristics of services should also be examined.

## 2.5. CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICES

Special consideration must be paid to service characteristics when designing marketing programmes (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008:239). Major factors driving the differences between goods and services marketing are categorised into four main characteristics of services: intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability (Etzel *et al.*, 2007:290).

Figure 2.2 illustrates the four main characteristics of services which differentiate services from products.

**Figure 2.2: Four service characteristics**



Source: Adapted from Kotler and Armstrong, (2008:239)

### 2.5.1. Intangibility of services

The intangibility characteristic of services, according to Grönroos (2004:48), is the most important characteristic. Hoffman and Bateson (2006:28) define intangibility as the



characteristic that makes services unable to be touched or sensed in the same manner as goods. Wilson *et al.* (2008:16) confirm this by explaining that services are performances or actions which cannot be seen, felt, tasted or touched in the same manner in which tangible goods can be sensed.

Kasper *et al.* (2006:58) propose that a service is an activity or an experience and not a thing; Etzel *et al.* (2007:290) further emphasise that it is impossible for prospective customers to sample services by means of feeling, seeing, hearing, tasting or smelling the specific service before they purchase it. Grönroos (2004:48) also indicates that customers use words such as experience, trust, feeling and security when describing services. Because services cannot be touched or seen in the same manner as goods, Hoffman and Bateson (2006:28) state that services are experienced and customer judgements tend to be more subjective.

This means that the marketing programme must be explicit about the benefits derived from the service. Etzel *et al.* (2007:291) suggests that four promotional strategies may be used to reduce the effect of intangibility. These strategies include visualisation, association, physical representation and documentation (Etzel *et al.*, 2007:291):

- **Visualisation:** These promotions include showing the customer the benefits of the service.
- **Association:** A particular image can be created by connecting the service with a tangible good, person, object or place.
- **Physical representation:** Symbols can be used to signify wealth and prestige, and unique delivery and support connected with the services for instance.
- **Documentation:** Promotional strategies can include the past performance or future capabilities of the provided services.

Because of the intangibility of services, a number of marketing challenges arise that are normally not faced when marketing goods – including the lack of service inventories, lack of patent protection, the difficulty involved in displaying and communicating the

attributes of the service to its intended target market, and pricing of services (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:28). Wilson *et al.* (2008:16) further add in this regard that services can be easily copied by competitors, and describe that it is difficult for customers to measure the quality of the services offered – this is because services cannot be easily displayed or communicated to customers.

### **2.5.2. Inseparability of services**

Hoffman *et al.* (2006:28) define inseparability as that characteristic of services that reveals the interconnection among the service provider, the customer receiving the service and other customers sharing the service experience. Service inseparability entails that service providers are involved along with the production and the marketing efforts. From a marketing point of view, this limits distribution since direct selling is the only possible channel of distribution; the service can only be sold where direct contact is possible between the customer and service provider (Etzel *et al.*, 2007:29). This personal contact in terms of services will take place during the service encounter where both the customer and employee have to perform certain activities (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:58).

Due to the inseparability of services, a number of marketing challenges occur that are not present when marketing goods. These include the physical connection of the service business to the service, the involvement of the customer in the production process, the involvement of other customers in the production process, and special challenges in the mass production of services (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:31).

### **2.5.3. Heterogeneity of services**

Heterogeneity is defined as a distinct characteristic of services that reveals the variation in consistency, according to Hoffman and Bateson (2001:39), which shapes one service transaction to the next and makes it difficult to standardise output.

Each component of the provided service is different to some extent from every other component of the same service; this situation is ascribed to the human factor in production and delivery (Hoffman *et al.*, 2006:40). Wilson *et al.* (2008:16) add in this regard that each customer has unique demands, and also experiences the services in their unique way. The service environment is further important in creating the right atmosphere in which services are shaped, because the right atmosphere will enable appropriate customer facilitation in the service production process (Kasper *et al.*, 2006:59).

According to Grönroos (2004:48), heterogeneity in services creates major problems for service management as it is difficult to maintain an evenly perceived quality of services delivered. Wilson *et al.* (2008:16) add to these challenges of heterogeneity by explaining that the service manager cannot always know for sure that the service delivered is consistent with what was originally planned and promoted. A service provider has to consistently balance employee control and the customers' perceived needs, according to Kasper *et al.* (2006:59) in order to standardise service delivery. Service companies should therefore pay special attention to the product-planning and implementation stages of their marketing programmes with a view to compensate for heterogeneity, and to ensure consistent quality and maintain high levels of quality control (Etzel *et al.*, 2007:291).

#### **2.5.4. Perishability of services**

Hoffman and Bateson (2001:41) define perishability as the unique characteristic of services that cannot be saved: their unused capability cannot be retained and they cannot be inventoried. Wilson *et al.* (2008:17) explains in simpler terms that perishability refers to the fact that services cannot be saved, stored, resold or returned. According to Etzel *et al.* (2007:291) services are highly perishable because the existing capacity cannot be stored or inventoried for future use – this creates potential imbalances in supply and demand. Kasper *et al.* (2006:60) further states that the

inability to store services creates difficulty in terms of matching service demand and supply.

Wilson *et al.* (2008:17) explain that demand forecasting and creative planning for capacity utilisation are challenging for service managers. Without the benefit of carrying an inventory, it becomes a major challenge to match demand and supply within most service businesses because of customers' unpredictable demand for services (Hoffman *et al.*, 2001:42). Kasper *et al.* (2006:60) add that the inability to meet customers' needs may cause strain on the resources of the service business.

As a result of the various characteristics of services – including intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability – it is apparent that service businesses are indeed faced with various challenges concerned with the marketing of services. It is important for service businesses to recognise these challenges and explore various solutions to potential service marketing problems.

The next section will present an overview of possible solutions to service intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability.

## **2.6 POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR SERVICE MARKETING PROBLEMS**

### **2.6.1 Possible solutions to intangibility problems**

According to Hoffman and Bateson (2001:30), various promising solutions for the problem of intangibility exist, including the use of tangible clues, the use of personal sources of information and creating a strong business image.

- **The use of tangible clues**

Businesses find it difficult to communicate their service offerings effectively to their customers. Businesses can make use of tangible clues or physical evidence that surround the service, because customers often look at the service environment to

assist them in making service evaluations (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:29). Tangible clues or physical evidence include characteristics surrounding the service including quality of furnishings, the appearance of personnel, or the quality of paper stock used to produce the business brochure (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:30).

- **The use of personal sources of information**

Customers often rely on subjective evaluations relayed by friends, family and a variety of opinion leaders when evaluating services, because of these personal sources of information become more important to customers than non-personal sources such as the mass media (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:29). Personal sources of information are a source of word-of-mouth advertising which can be used by presenting incentives to existing customers to inform their friends about the business to stimulate word-of-mouth advertising (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:30).

- **Creating a strong business image**

Due to intangibility the amount of customer perceived risk associated with purchases is greater according to Hoffman *et al.* (2009:30) which means that service businesses should spend substantial time, effort and money to develop a recognised business image. A well-known and respected business image lowers the level of perceived risk experienced by prospective customers, and also lowers the reliance on personal sources of information when making service provider decisions (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:31).

## 2.6.2 Possible solutions to inseparability problems

According to Hoffman and Bateson (2001:36), various promising solutions exist in terms of the problem of inseparability, including emphasis on selecting and training public contact personnel, customer management and the use of multisite locations.

- **Emphasis on selecting and training customer contact personnel**

Customers, as well as contact personnel, are part of the service environment (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:36). Contact personnel exhibit variations in behaviour that cannot be controlled by the service process, including their attitudes and emotions which are apparent to the customer (and can influence the service experience of the customer). Intelligent, motivated personnel can generate a more enjoyable service experience for everyone, in contrast to unhappy or rude personnel (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:36). The selection and training strategy of customer contact personnel reduce the impact of inseparability through hiring and training personnel a way that allows the customer to experience positive service in an environment where employees are appropriately equipped to handle customers and their needs (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:37).

- **Customer management**

Customer management can also be used to minimise the problem of inseparability by separating customers with different requirements to better serve them (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:36). An example of using customer management is the separation of non-smokers from smokers in restaurants to give customers a positive service experience (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:40).

- **Use of multisite locations**

Service businesses can set up multiple locations to offset the effects of inseparability (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:37). Multisite locations limit the distance the customer should have to travel to purchase the service; it can also serve the local market because of their own supply of services (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:40).

### 2.6.3 Possible solutions to heterogeneity problems

According to Hoffman *et al.* (2009:40), a variety of promising solutions for the problem of heterogeneity exists, including customisation and standardisation.

- **Customisation**

Service businesses can utilise the variation inherent in each service encounter by developing services that meet each customers' exact specifications (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001: 39).

- **Standardisation**

Service businesses can attempt to standardise their services through training and by replacing human labour with machines, which will help to reduce variability in service creation (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:40).

#### 2.6.4 Possible solutions to perishability problems

According to Hoffman and Bateson (2001:42), various promising solutions exist in terms of the problem of perishability, including emphasis on selecting and training public contact personnel, customer management and the use of multisite locations.

##### 2.6.4.1 Demand strategies

Because of the service perishability, service demand has to be managed carefully with a view to prevent a lost opportunity that can develop when demand exceeds capacity (Rust & Chung, 2006:560).

- **Creative pricing**

According to Hoffman and Bateson (2001:43), creative pricing strategies are often used by service businesses to help level demand variations by offering lower prices or specials to shift demand from peak to nonpeak periods.

Customer expectations can have an impact on demand by influencing what customers perceive to be a fair monetary exchange for the service (Rust & Chung, 2006:560).

Price-conscious target markets such as families are prepared to adjust their demand patterns for cost savings, whereas service businesses are eager to offer price reductions with a view to attract customers during nonpeak periods (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:46).

- **Reservation systems**

Reservation system strategies can be implemented to help level demand variations in which customers request a portion of the service business' services for a particular time period (Hoffman *et al.*, 2001:46). This strategy suggests that the customers' risk of not receiving the service is reduced, the business' time spent waiting for the service to be presented is minimised and it allows the service business to prepare in advance for a known quality of demand (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001: 44).

- **Development of complementary services**

Complementary services can buffer the problem of perishability by relating directly to the core service offering, for example, driving ranges at golf courses, arcades at movie theatres or reading materials in doctors' offices, which are aimed at making the waiting period for services more enjoyable for the customer (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:46).

- **Development of non-peak demand**

Non-peak demand strategies can be used to reduce the effects of perishability by preparing for peak service demand periods during nonpeak service demand periods (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001: 45). One of the techniques explained by Rust and Chung (2006:565) involves lowering the price charged during the nonpeak period to smooth out fluctuations in demand. Nonpeak demand can also be used in order to create additional revenues by marketing to a different market segment that has a different demand pattern than the business' usual target market (Hoffman *et al.*, 2001:47).



#### 2.6.4.2 Supply strategies

In addition to managing demand, the effects of perishability can be minimised through strategies that make additional supply available during peak service demand periods (Hoffman *et al.*, 2001:47).

- **Part-time employee utilisation**

When service businesses make use of part-time personnel, this gives the business the benefit of lower labour costs and a flexible labour force that can be employed when required (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:45).

- **Capacity sharing**

Capacity sharing strategies can be used by service businesses to increase the supply of service by forming a type of mutual society among service providers that permits members to enlarge their supply or service as a whole (Hoffman *et al.*, 2001:48). This means that service businesses combine their efforts by sharing the costs and storage of expensive systematic equipment (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:46).

- **Advance preparation for expansion**

Advance preparation for expansion can save months in responding to demand pressures, and can also save on costs in terms of the service businesses' expansion, which requires a long-term orientation with regard to the building of their physical facilities (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:46).

- **Utilisation of third parties**

Third parties as a supply strategy describes a situation where service businesses make use of outside parties to service customers; in doing so they save on costs and personnel (Hoffman *et al.*, 2001:48).

- **Increase in customer participation**

Customer participation can be used to minimise the problem of perishability by increasing the supply of service by having the customer perform part of the service (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:47).

It is clear that managing customers in any service business is crucial for businesses in order to succeed in the competitive service environment. It is important for businesses to understand what customers perceive as quality services, what their expectations are and what their needs are concerning services.

The next section will address the management of customers by referring to high and low-contact services, the customer purchasing process, as well as the customer decision-making process.

## **2.7 MANAGING CUSTOMERS**

Understanding customer behaviour is at the heart of marketing because customers have certain service expectations and find it difficult to evaluate services in advance of a purchase (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:29). It is important to understand the nature of a particular service since services differ from one another. Kasper *et al.* (2006:65) indicate that an understanding the various types of services can be achieved by classifying services (Kotler & Armstrong., 2008:220)

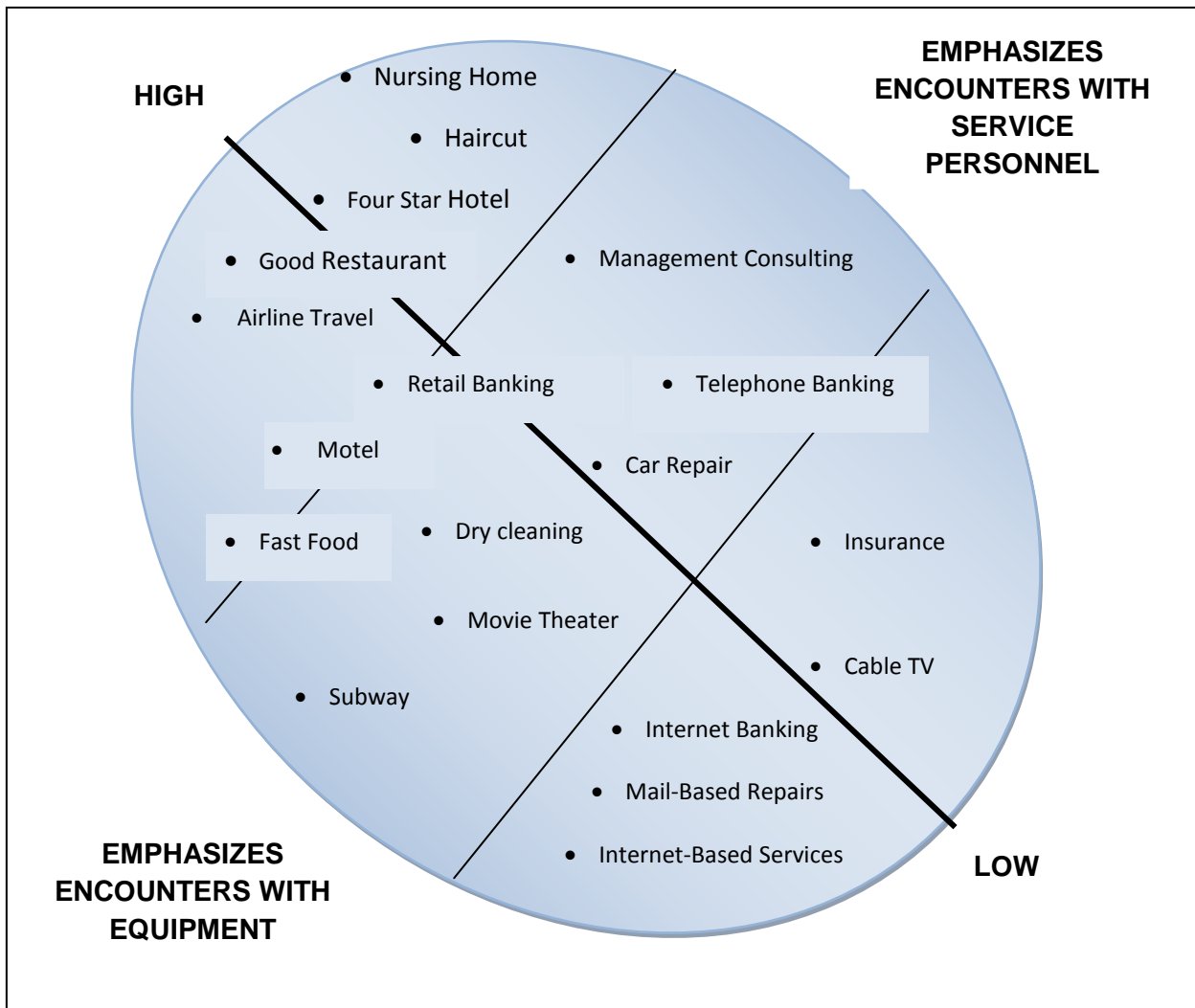
### **2.7.1 Types of service encounters**

A service encounter refers to a period of time during which customers interact directly with a service. During the service encounter, the customer makes conscious and unconscious assessments of the quality of the service and also makes a decision whether to remain a loyal customer.

These emphasise the importance of making the service encounter a positive experience for the customer (Gummesson, 2007:10).

Various types of service encounters are defined by Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:33), including high-contact and low-contact services. These different levels are explained in figure 2.3 which also indicates the levels of customer contact within service businesses.

**FIGURE 2.3: Levels of customer contact with service businesses**



**Source: Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:34)**

- **High-contact services**

According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:33), high-contact service encounters involve personal visits from customers to the service business where customers are actively involved with the service and its personnel during service delivery.

Gummesson (2007:10) explains that personal contact during the service encounters gives rise to an important part of the customers' perception of service quality. Examples of high-contact services specified by Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:33) include hairdressing, lodging and medical services.

- **Low-contact services**

Low-contact service encounters involve little physical contact between the customers and the service business or its personnel (Lovelock & Wirtz (2004:33). Gummesson (2007:11) explains that the service production system used in low-contact services should be understood, accepted and should attract the customer rather than making customers feel insecure because the system is too complicated.

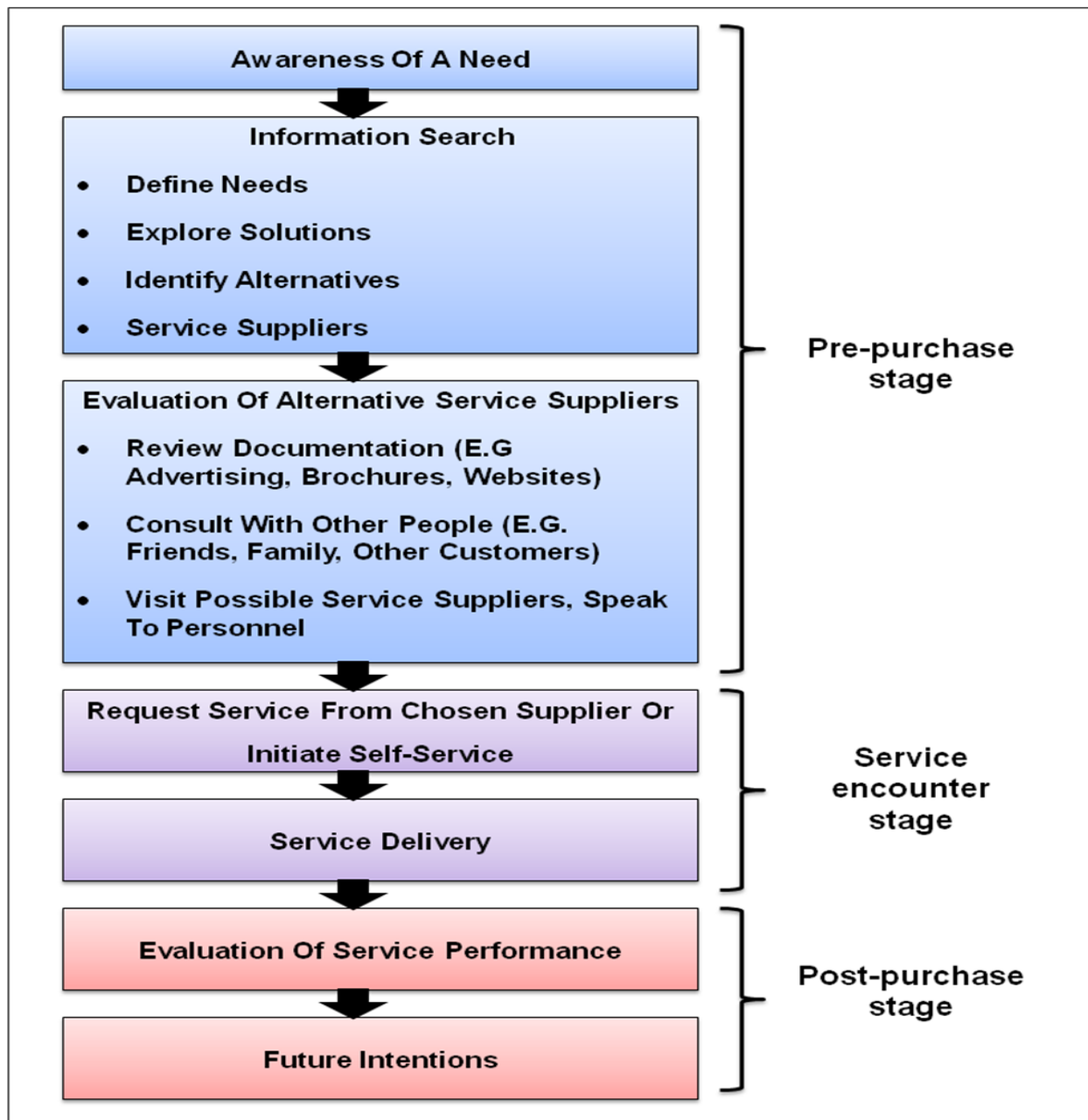
These services include mail and courier services as well as electronic channels such as telephone and the internet to enable the customer do home shopping or insurance and banking by telephone or online (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:33).

In order to market a service effectively, marketing managers need to understand the thought process used by customers during each of the three stages of the customer decision-making process, which include the pre-purchase choice among alternatives, the customers' reaction during service delivery, and the post-purchase stage (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:82).

## 2.7.2 Customer purchase process

Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:35) illustrate the complex purchase process involved when customers decide to purchase a service to meet an unfilled need (Figure 2.4).

**FIGURE 2.4: The purchase process for services**



Source: Adapted from Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:35)

### 2.7.2.1 Pre-purchasing stage

Hoffman and Bateson (2001:84) describe the pre-purchase stage as all those customer activities occurring before and leading up to the acquisition of the service.

Individual needs and expectations are crucial during the pre-purchase stage as it influences what alternatives customers will consider and decide whether to buy and use a particular service (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:35). When the service purchase is routine and relatively low-risk, customers select and use a service more quickly, while in the case of higher-risk services where more is at stake, customers will carry out an intensive information search (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:36).

Service businesses can reduce perceived risks experienced by customers (see Tables 2.3), by offering guarantees and encouraging potential customers to visit their service facilities (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:37).

**Table 2.3: Perceived risks in purchasing and using services**

TYPE OF RISK	EXAMPLES OF CUSTOMER CONCERNS
<b>Functional</b> (unsatisfactory performance outcomes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will this training course give me the skills I need to get a better job?</li><li>• Will this credit card be accepted wherever and whenever I want to make a purchase?</li></ul>
<b>Financial</b> (monetary loss, unexpected costs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will I lose money if I make the investment recommended by my stockbroker?</li><li>• Will I incur a lot of unanticipated expenses if I go on this vacation?</li></ul>
<b>Temporal</b> (waste time, consequences of delays)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will I have to wait in line before entering the exhibition?</li><li>• Will services at this restaurant be so slow that I will be late for my afternoon meeting?</li></ul>
<b>Physical</b> (personal injury or damage to possessions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will I get hurt if I go skiing at this resort?</li><li>• Will the contents of this package get damaged in the mail?</li></ul>

**Source: Adapted from Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:36)**

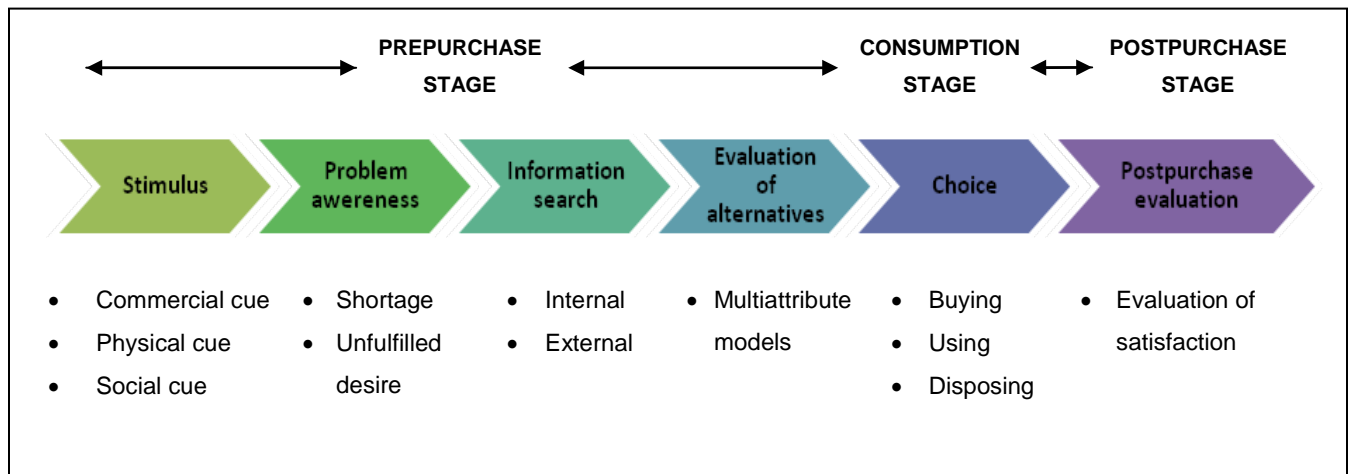
**Table 2.3: Perceived risks in purchasing and using services (continued)**

TYPE OF RISK	EXAMPLES OF CUSTOMER CONCERNS
<b>Psychological</b> (personal fears and emotions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can I be sure that this aircraft won't crash?</li> <li>• Will the doctor's diagnosis upset me?</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b> (how others think and react)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will my friends think of me if they learnt that I stayed at this cheap hotel?</li> <li>• Will my relatives approve of the restaurant I have chosen for the family reunion dinner?</li> </ul>
<b>Sensory</b> (unwanted impacts on any of the five senses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will I get a view of the parking lot rather than the beach from my room?</li> <li>• Will I be kept awake by noise from the guests in the room next door?</li> </ul>

**Source: Adapted from Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:36)**

Hoffman and Bateson (2001:84) add to this stage by dividing the pre-purchase stage into four key phases that customers experience when making the service purchase decision; these entail the stimulus, problem awareness, information search and the evaluation of alternatives; these are illustrated in Figure 2.5.

**Figure 2.5: Customer decision process**



**Source: Hoffman and Bateson (2001:84)**

- **The stimulus**

According to Hoffman and Bateson (2001:86), the stimulus is the thought, action or motivation that encourages a potential customer to consider a purchase. The stimulus may be commercial cues as a result of promotional efforts, social cues that result from the customers' peer group or physical cues such as thirst, hunger or various biological cues (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:86). Kotler and Armstrong (2008:147) explain that the problem awareness or the need for the product or service is triggered by the stimuli.

- **Problem awareness**

During this phase, Kotler and Armstrong (2008:147) explain that the customer determines whether a need or want exists for the service. The need may be based on a shortage (a need) or an unfulfilled desire (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:86).

- **Information search**

According to Hoffman and Bateson (2001:86), the potential customer searches for alternatives during the information search phase by collecting information regarding possible alternatives and by first engaging in an internal search, followed by an external search.

Kotler and Armstrong (2008:148) state that customers obtain information through various sources, including personal sources (family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances), commercial sources (advertising, personnel, web sites, displays), public sources (mass media, customer ratings of businesses, internet searches) and experiential sources (examining, using the service).

During the internal search, customers gather information from personal memory about the service. The external search phase involves the collection of information from sources outside the customer's own experience (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:86).



- **Evaluation of alternatives**

The evaluation of alternatives phase may include a non-systematic evaluation of alternatives such as the customer’s intuition, or systematic evaluation techniques such as a multi-attribute model, which uses a set of formalised steps in order to make a decision (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:86).

Table 2.4 provides an illustration of a multi-attribute choice matrix that can be used during the evaluation of alternatives phase by customers who want to decide which fitness facility they should choose. During the evaluation phase, the customer places a value or rank on each alternative in order to make the most effective service purchase decision (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:86).

**Table 2.4: A typical multi-attribute choice matrix**

Evoked sets of brands					
Attributes of fitness facilities	Fitness facility A	Fitness facility B	Fitness facility C	Fitness facility D	Important weights
Location	10	10	10	9.9	10
Price	10	10	9	9	9
Training equipment	10	10	10	10	8
Refreshments	8	9	9	9	7
Qualified personnel	10	8	8	10	6

**Source: Adapted from Hoffman and Bateson (2001:86)**

### 2.7.2.2 Service encounter stage

Hoffman and Bateson (2001:87) describe this phase as the process during which customers purchase and use the service. After customers have made a purchase decision, they experience additional contacts with their chosen service provider and begin to submit a request for a service. These contacts may assume the form of personal exchanges between customers and service personnel or impersonal

interactions with machines or computers. Customers can experience a range of elements throughout service delivery which may supply evidence regarding their service quality experience (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:37).

### 2.7.2.3 **Post-purchase stage**

Kotler and Armstrong (2008:149) define the post-purchase stage as the phase during which customers take further action based on their perceived satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the purchase. According to Hoffman and Bateson (2001:87), during the post-purchase stage the customer determines whether the correct service purchase decision was made. During this stage of the customer purchasing process, customers continue evaluating service quality as well as their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service experience; this will influence their future intentions including their loyalty to the service business (Hoffman & Bateson, 2001:86).

Lovelock and Wirtz (2004:37) explain that customers evaluate service quality by comparing what they have expected with what they perceive that they have received from the service business. Customers are likely to be satisfied with the service if their experiences were met or exceeded by the service business (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008:149), while they may complain when their expectations were not met (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:37). Kotler and Armstrong (2008:149) propose that dissatisfied customers may respond with bad word-of-mouth, which can have devastating effects on the business, as bad word-of-mouth-travels farther and faster than good word-of-mouth marketing.

The larger the gap between the expectations of the customers and the service performance, the greater customer dissatisfaction will be (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008:149). The importance of customer expectations and perceptions in terms of customer satisfaction is apparent. Service businesses need to understand the impact that customer perceptions and expectations can have on the level of customer satisfaction experienced. This will be explained in the next section.

## 2.8 IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS IN SERVICE SATISFACTION

During the service delivery process, customers measure service satisfaction and evaluate overall service quality by comparing their expectations with their perceptions (Coye, 2004:68). Customer satisfaction refers to the customers' perception of the performance of the service weighed against their expectations of the service performance (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:9). When the service performance exceeds the customers' expectations, the service is perceived as an exceptional quality service and customers are satisfied, but when the service expectations are not met, the service quality is viewed as unacceptable (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2008:108).

Customer satisfaction with a fitness facility is influenced by customer perceptions of service quality, for example the availability and condition of equipment and the responsiveness of staff, but will also include perceptions of the product quality (for instance, the membership price, personal factors such as the customer's emotional state as well as uncontrollable situational factors, such as weather conditions and experiences driving to and from the fitness facility (Wilson *et al.*, 2006:78).

Du Plessis, *et al.* (2007:160) define customer perception as the customers' process of observing, selecting, organising and reacting to the environmental stimuli in a meaningful way. Customers perceive services in terms of the quality of the service and how satisfied they are overall with their experiences (Wilson *et al.*, 2006:78).

Customer expectation, on the other hand, is defined by Du Plessis *et al.* (2007:159) as beliefs concerning the performance of the service; this can also be explained as the customers' desired product and service outcomes. Wilson *et al.* (2008:55) add to Du Plessis' definition of expectations by stating that expectations are beliefs about service delivery that provide standards or reference points against which performances are evaluated.

According to Wilson *et al.* (2008:55), the first and most significant step in quality service delivery entails understanding what the customer expects. Understanding how customers perceive services can help marketers to develop strategies to achieve increased market share and satisfy customers' needs more effectively (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2007:177).

## 2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter described various aspects relevant to services and services marketing. The nature of services, including the differences that exist between the marketing of services from the marketing of goods, was discussed and this discussion gave rise to the identification of service problems as well as their marketing solutions. The management of customers were explored by referring to the customer decision-making process as well as the customer purchase process.

Furthermore, the chapter briefly explained the importance of customer perceptions and expectations regarding service satisfaction during service encounters. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter when customer satisfaction with services will be explored.

# CHAPTER 3

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is one of the most studied areas in marketing; this can be proved by the fact that more than 15 000 academic articles that have been written on the subject (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006:302). Hoffman *et al.*, (2009:367) state that a great deal of research on customer satisfaction was conducted during the 1970s when consumerism led to a decline in the provision of services, resulting in customer dissatisfaction. Customer satisfaction has been the focus of considerable marketing research across many industries, including the health and fitness industry (Javadein *et al.*, 2008:4).

Service satisfaction within a fitness facility is a broad concept that can be influenced by perceptions of service and product quality. According to Wilson *et al.* (2008:78), the price of membership, personal factors (such as the customers' emotional state) and even uncontrollable situational factors (such as weather conditions and experiences driving to and from the fitness facility) can influence customers' perception of service quality.

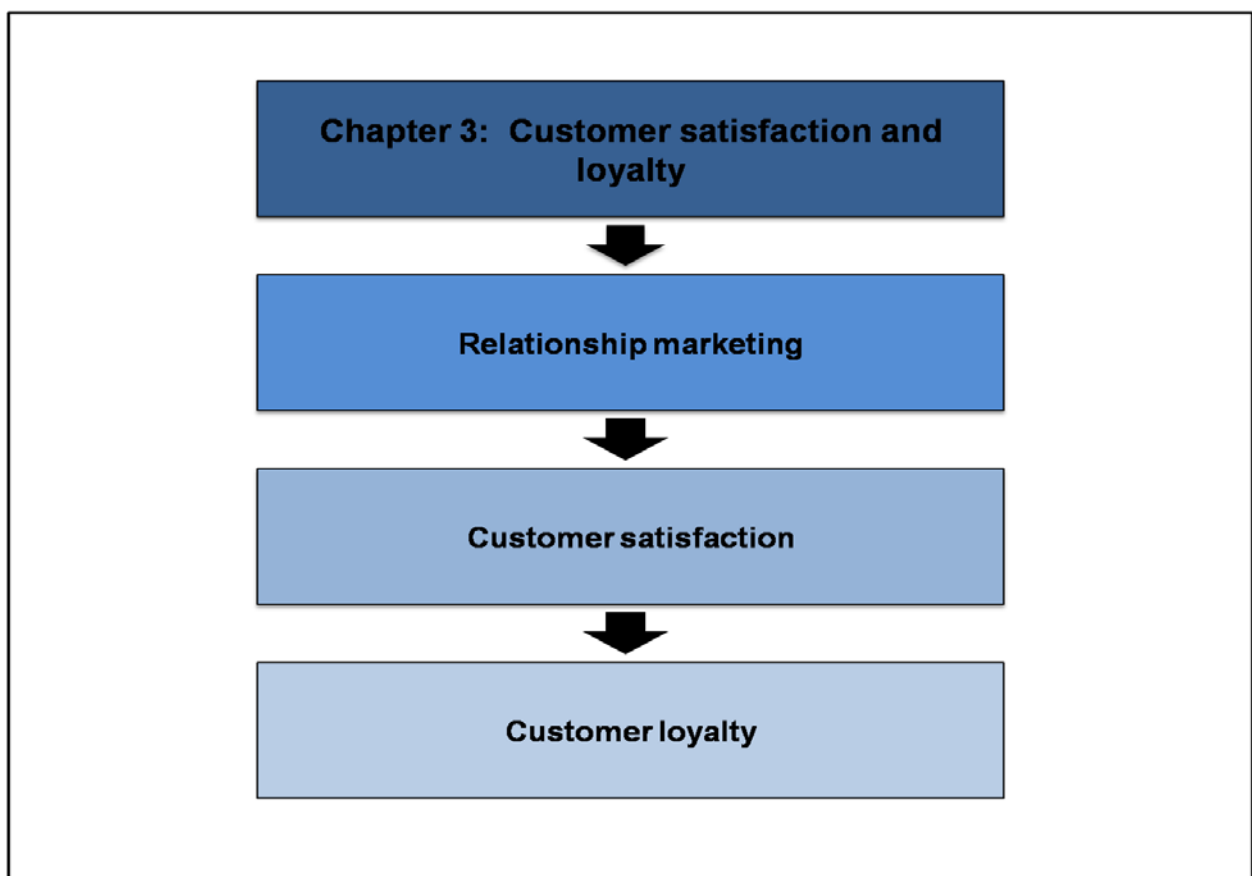
During service encounters with fitness facilities, customers interact with the service business and employees, which may result in the development of a customer relationship with the service business.

According to Scriffman and Kanuk (2007:554), many businesses have recognised relationship marketing programmes as tools that can be used in order to develop customer loyalty and commitment to their business and services offerings. Relationship marketing programmes are especially important for service businesses as these

programmes provide managers with the required understanding of their customers' needs and assist them in modifying their services according to the different needs of their customers (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:351).

Managers of service businesses have also realised that relationship marketing is a key factor in creating customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and retention (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:348). From the above it is clear that customer relationship marketing can influence customer satisfaction which, in turn, can result in customer loyalty. For this chapter, the focus will therefore be on customer relationship marketing, followed by customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as illustrated in figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1: Chapter layout**



In the next section of the chapter, relationship marketing will be explained, as well as the importance of this concept.

## 3.2 RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

In order to fully understand relationship marketing, it is useful to compare the characteristics of relationship marketing with those of traditional (or transactional) marketing.

### 3.2.1 Differences between traditional marketing and relationship marketing

The various differences between relationship marketing and traditional marketing are shown in Table 3.1. One of the most important differences between relationship marketing and traditional marketing is the focus on customer retention rather than once-off sales, as is the case with traditional marketing (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:347).

Furthermore, relationship marketing differs from traditional marketing in terms of the level of customer service offered. As proposed by Hoffman *et al.* (2009:348), a high level of quality customer service is needed in order to build a lasting relationship, including the creation of feelings of security, trust and commitment.

Hoffman *et al.* (2009:348) emphasise the importance of forming long-term relationships with customers by indicating that a sale to a new customer entails greater costs than an additional sale to an existing customer; the authors explain that a lapsed customer means that the business experiences loss of income.

According to Hoffman *et al.* (2009:348), relationship marketing is the key component in creating customer satisfaction and above all loyalty.

Customer satisfaction is recognised by researchers and practitioners to be the main predecessor of customer loyalty and retention (Bodet, 2007:1). Hill and Alexander (2000:1) confirm this by stating that a strong link exists between customer satisfaction, customer retention and a business' profitability.

**Table 3.1: Traditional marketing and relationship marketing compared**

<b>TRADITIONAL MARKETING</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP MARKETING</b>
Focus on single sale	Focus on customer retention
Quality is primary concern of operations	Quality is concern of all
Orientation on features	Orientation on benefits
Short-term	Long-term
Little emphasis on customer service	High levels of customer service
Limited customer commitment	High customer commitment
Moderate customer contact	High customer contact
Passive consumers	Active consumers
Competition / conflict	Co-operation / partnership
Need satisfaction	Customer retention
Customer satisfaction	Empowering customers

**Source: Hoffman *et al.* (2009:348)**

### 3.2.2 Relationship marketing defined

Different definitions exist for the concept of relationship marketing.

Relationship marketing is defined by Wood (2004:27) as marketing aimed at building ongoing relationships with customers rather than motivating isolated purchase transactions.

Relationship marketing is also defined as the process of identifying, developing, maintaining and terminating relational interactions with the purpose of enhancing performance (Palmatier, 2008:5).



Customer relationship marketing as described by Hoffman *et al.* (2009:345) entails a focus on the needs, characteristics and behaviour of customers with a view to develop a mutually beneficial relationship which enhances the levels of involvement of both parties through shared interest, followed by long-term loyalty and support.

Wilson *et al.* (2008:152) define customer relationship marketing as a philosophy of doing business and a strategic orientation that focuses on keeping and improving the relationships with existing customers rather than acquiring new customers. Hoffman and Bateson (2006:405) confirm these definitions by stating that customer relationship marketing is a marketing technique that is used to develop long-term relationships with customers.

**From these definitions it is clear that relationship marketing within the health and fitness industry can be defined as a marketing technique and a philosophy of doing business aimed at building ongoing, mutually beneficial and long-term relationships with existing customers and other stakeholders, as well as keeping and improving these relationships by focussing on the needs, characteristics and behaviour of customers.**

### **3.2.3 The importance and purpose of relationship marketing**

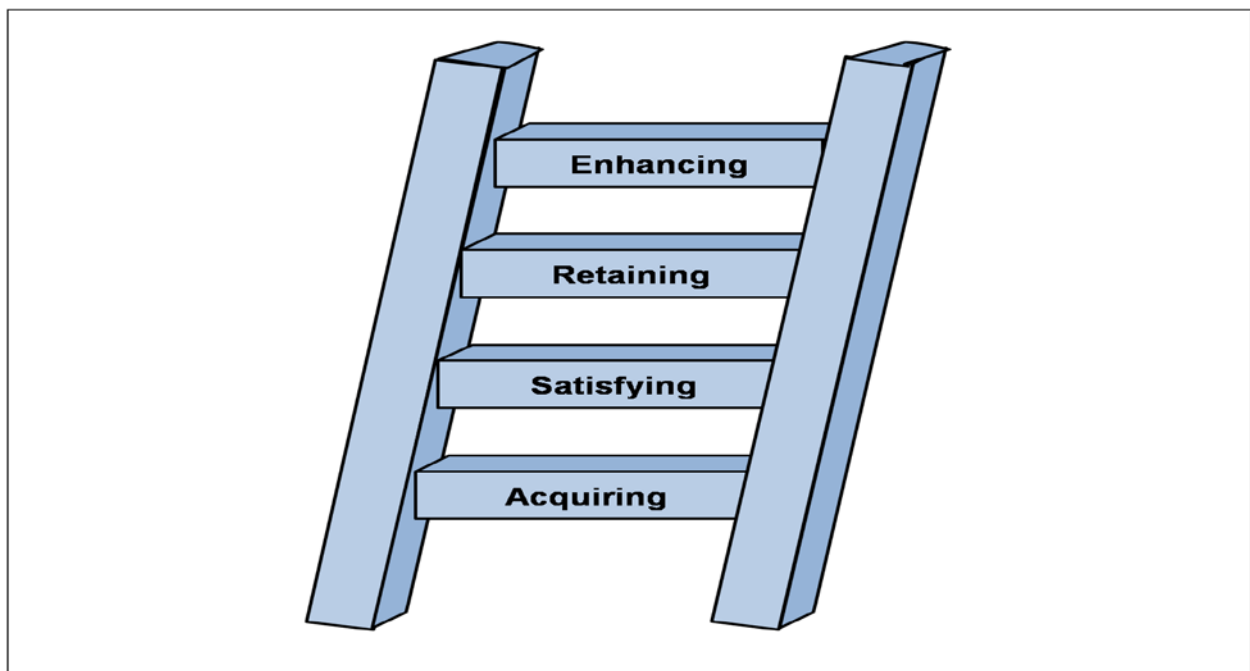
Targeting, acquiring and retaining the right customers are at the core of many successful service businesses, including businesses within the health and fitness industry. The implementation of relationship marketing provides managers of service businesses with the necessary tools to understand their customers and tailor their services according to customers' needs (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004:351). In a service context, the relationship between customers and the business is important because services are naturally relationship-orientated; a notion that can be used as a basis for marketing (Grönroos, 2004:22).

The primary goal of relationship marketing, according to Wilson *et al.* (2008:156), is therefore to build and maintain a base of committed customers who are profitable for the business. Hoffman *et al.* (2009:346) add that the main purpose of customer relationship marketing is customer loyalty and retention; these are long-term goals aimed at developing customer involvement, commitment, trust and loyalty which is achieved by high levels of customer service.

According to Grönroos (2004:243), the goal of relationship marketing is to identify, establish, maintain, enhance and when needed, end relationships with customers so that the economic objectives of the service businesses are achieved by means of a mutual exchange and the fulfilment of promises.

Wilson *et al.* (2008:156) illustrate the goals of relationship marketing in Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2: Customer goals of relationship marketing**



**Source: Wilson *et al.* (2008:157)**

According to Wilson *et al.* (2008:156), a major goal of relationship marketing is to move customers up the ladder from the point at which they are attracted to the business and satisfied with the service provided, to the point where they are highly valued, long-term customers.

One of the main goals of customer relationship marketing within the health and fitness industry would therefore be to attract new customers while also keeping current customers satisfied with the services delivered. Customer satisfaction will be explained in the next section of the chapter.

### **3.3 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

Businesses cannot succeed without building customer satisfaction and loyalty (Timm, 2005:3). Young and Oakley (2008:213) propose that a major strategy towards achieving customer satisfaction in the health and fitness industry is by means of good management, through which a genuine customer focus and also a focus on continual improvements are developed. In the health and fitness industry, it is an important task for managers to meet the demand for customer satisfaction because of the growing competitive environment health and fitness businesses are faced with today (Theodorakis *et al.*, 2004:44).

The importance of customer satisfaction cannot be overstated, according to Hoffman and Bateson (2006:302), for the reason that service businesses rely on customers in order to survive in a competitive service industry. Therefore, service businesses have the responsibility to continuously define and determine customer satisfaction within their businesses.

#### **3.3.1 Defining customer satisfaction**

Different definitions for customer satisfaction can be identified from the literature.

Customer satisfaction as defined by Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:9) refers to the customers' perception of the service performance in comparison with the customers' expectations.

Hoffman *et al.* (2009:369) confirm this definition by explaining that customer satisfaction entails a comparison of the customers' expectations and perceptions regarding the actual service encounter.

Customer satisfaction as described by Javadein *et al.* (2008:3) refers to a situation where a customer's expectations are met and the customer is fulfilled, which can lead to overall satisfaction with services. Blackwell *et al.* (2006:742) define customer satisfaction as the positive post-purchase assessment where customers' expectations were met or exceeded.

**From the above definitions customer satisfaction can be defined as a post-purchase assessment where customers compare their expectations to their perceptions with regard to the service encounter and where the customers' expectations were met or exceeded.**

The next section of the chapter will address the notion of customer satisfaction as well as dissatisfaction with services in more detail.

### **3.3.2 Customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is commonly based on the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006:403);. According to Kandampully (1998:432), this paradigm implies that customers compare the quality of service experienced to their prior expectations, a process that leads to an emotional reaction manifested in the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services purchased.

Ojasalo (2001:200) emphasises that perceived service quality and satisfaction with services result from how well the actual service performance matches or exceeds the customers' expectations. Hoffman *et al.* (2009:368) explain that when customers' perceptions in a service encounter meet or exceed the customers' expectations, the customer will be satisfied. Alternatively, when a customer's perceptions are not met by their service expectations, the customers' expectations are disconfirmed and customers will be dissatisfied with the service.

Disconfirmation is not necessarily a negative experience; according to Hoffman and Bateson (2006:304) two types of disconfirmations exist, including negative disconfirmation (that results when customer perceptions are lower than customer expectations) and positive disconfirmation (that results when customer perceptions exceed customers expectations).

Based on the above discussion it can be argued that managers and marketers of health and fitness businesses should understand their customers' perceptions and expectations with regard to the services offered. This understanding will assist fitness facilities and service businesses and ensure increased service performance on the way towards meeting the perceptions and expectations of current customers, and assist business ultimately to reap the benefits of customer satisfaction.

### 3.3.3 Benefits of customer satisfaction

Service businesses such as fitness facilities can reap valuable benefits when customers are satisfied with services delivered. The following benefits can be identified:

- **Positive word-of-mouth**

Positive word-of-mouth advertising arising from customer satisfaction can often result in the attraction of new customers and more frequent purchases of services and products from current satisfied customers. This will lower the risk of losing customers to competitors (Ziethaml *et al.*, 2009:185).

- **Protect business from competitive pressures**

Service businesses that command high customer satisfaction ratings can also protect themselves from competitive pressures like price competition, as customers are willing to pay more for services that satisfy and meet their needs (Godson, 2009:76).

- **Positive work environments**

Customer satisfaction within service businesses can also lead to positive work environments, according to Hoffman and Bateson (2006:306), where employees are challenged to perform and are rewarded for their efforts which will ultimately make them more productive.

- **Feedback from customers**

Hoffman *et al.* (2009;371) explain that service businesses can benefit from customer satisfaction surveys where businesses can get formal feedback from customers. Such feedback can be used to let customers know that the business cares about their well-being and values customer input concerning its services.

- **Valuable information**

Customer satisfaction surveys also provide useful information which can be used by the service business to compare its services with those of competitors in order to assess, maintain and establish a competitive advantage (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006:307).

It is clear that customer satisfaction will benefit any service business, including those businesses within the health and fitness industry. It is therefore important for health and fitness businesses to make use of customer satisfaction surveys in order to attain valuable information which can be used to create a satisfactory service environment for customers, to ensure that the benefits mentioned above can be reaped by health and fitness businesses.

### 3.4 MEASURING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Hill and Alexander (2000:10) indicate the importance of measuring customer satisfaction by stating that management is most likely to make the wrong decisions without accurate customer satisfaction measurements. According to Hoffman *et al.* (2006:373), customer satisfaction can be measured by means of indirect and direct measures.

Indirect customer satisfaction measures include tracking customer satisfaction by studying changes in sales, profits and the number of customer complaints received (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006:307). Direct customer satisfaction measures include gathering data by means of customer satisfaction surveys (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:373).

Various scales can be used when a service business is gathering direct customer satisfaction data, such as the scale of 100 approach, the very dissatisfied/very satisfied approach, and the combined approach which will be discussed in the following section.

#### 3.4.1 The scale of 100 approach

Service businesses use the scale of 100 approach by requesting that their customers rate the service performance by assigning a grade on a scale of 100 (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006:308). However, this approach does not provide detailed suggestions for improvements that will lead to increased customer satisfaction.

#### 3.4.2 The very dissatisfied/very satisfied approach

Service businesses can also make use of a 5-point scale to gather customer satisfaction data from their customers. This usually entails the following format, according to Hoffman *et al.* (2009:373):

Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

This approach allows service businesses to determine a satisfaction rating which will help them to establish how customers experience the services delivered. However, this approach does not provide the service business with an indication of specific areas where service improvement is needed (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006:308).

### 3.4.3 The combined approach

Service businesses can use qualitative feedback obtained from customers who may have indicated that they were less than very satisfied and where the performance of the service offered were lower than the customers' service expectations. According to Hoffman *et al.* (2009:375), service businesses can request feedback on how the service business could improve their service performance.

The combined approach allows the service business to gather quantitative as well as qualitative information. A combination of such information is more valuable and will assist the service business to increase the overall service performance, which will then lead to increased customer satisfaction (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006:309).

**In the current study regarding customer satisfaction within fitness facilities, the quantitative approach to the measurement of customer satisfaction will be used.**

Thus far, the current chapter has provided a broad overview of customer satisfaction with services, including the importance, benefits and measurement of customer satisfaction. This next section will present a closer look at customer service expectations, customer perceptions of services as well as the zone of tolerance regarding services performance.



### 3.5 TYPES OF CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Fitness facilities should ensure that they meet or exceed customer expectations because all customers have expectations about the service (Rhys, 2008:198).

Customer expectations can be defined as customer beliefs about service performance which serves as standards or reference points against which customers of services judge the performance of the delivered service, according to Wilson *et al.* (2008:55). Understanding what customers expect from services is critical for service businesses, including fitness facilities, as this understanding will lead to the delivery of quality services which ultimately lead to customer satisfaction (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:55).

Hoffman and Bateson (2006:320) explain that there are three types of customer expectations that exist within the service industry; these include predicted service expectations, desired services expectations and adequate service expectations.

#### 3.5.1 Predicted service expectations

Predicted service expectations, according to Hoffman *et al.* (2009:387), refer to a probability expectation that reveals the level of service customers believe is likely to occur.

#### 3.5.2 Desired service expectations

Hoffman and Bateson (2006:321) explain that desired service expectations are ideal expectations that reveal what customers actually want from a service encounter. In simpler terms, Ziethaml *et al.* (2009:77) describe the desired service expectation as the level of service customers hope to receive; it can be explained as the blend of what the customer believes the service can be and should be.

### 3.5.3 Adequate service expectations

Adequate service expectations refer to a minimum tolerance expectation and reflect the level of service the customer is willing to accept (Ziethaml *et al.*, 2009:77). Wilson *et al.* (2008:57) state that adequate service simply refers to the level of service that the customer will accept and suggests the minimum tolerable service expectation.

According to Hoffman and Bateson (2006:322), customers learn to expect variation in service delivery from one day to the next as a result of the heterogeneity characteristic of services which, according to Kotler *et al.* (2008:239), means that the quality of services offered depend on different elements such as who, when, where and how services are provided.

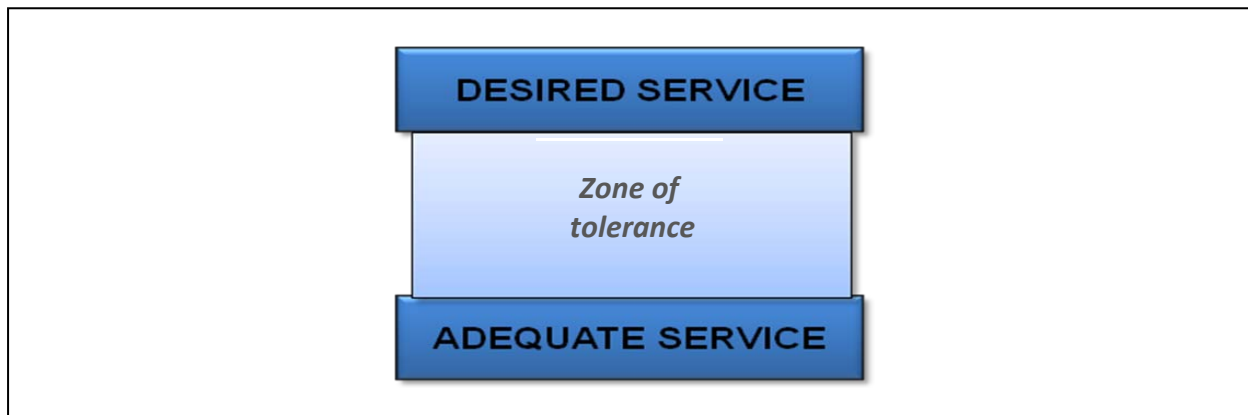
The extent to which customers recognise and are willing to except this variation is called the zone of tolerance (Ziethaml *et al.*, 2009:80). This concept will subsequently be explained.

## 3.6 THE ZONE OF TOLERANCE

Hoffman and Bateson (2006:322) define the zone of tolerance as the level of quality ranging from high to low that reflects the difference between desired service and adequate service, as seen in Figure 3.3. Wilson *et al.* (2008:58) confirm the above definition of the zone of tolerance by stating that it refers to the extent to which customers recognise and are willing to accept this variation.

Managers of fitness facilities need to understand what the needs of their customers are, and whether or not customers' expectations are met (Rhys, 2008:200). Managers also need to understand the factors that shape customer expectations, because of the important role that expectations play in customers' evaluation of services (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:60). These factors will now be discussed.

**Figure 3.3: The zone of tolerance.**



**Source: Wilson *et al.* (2008:57)**

### **3.7 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPECTATIONS**

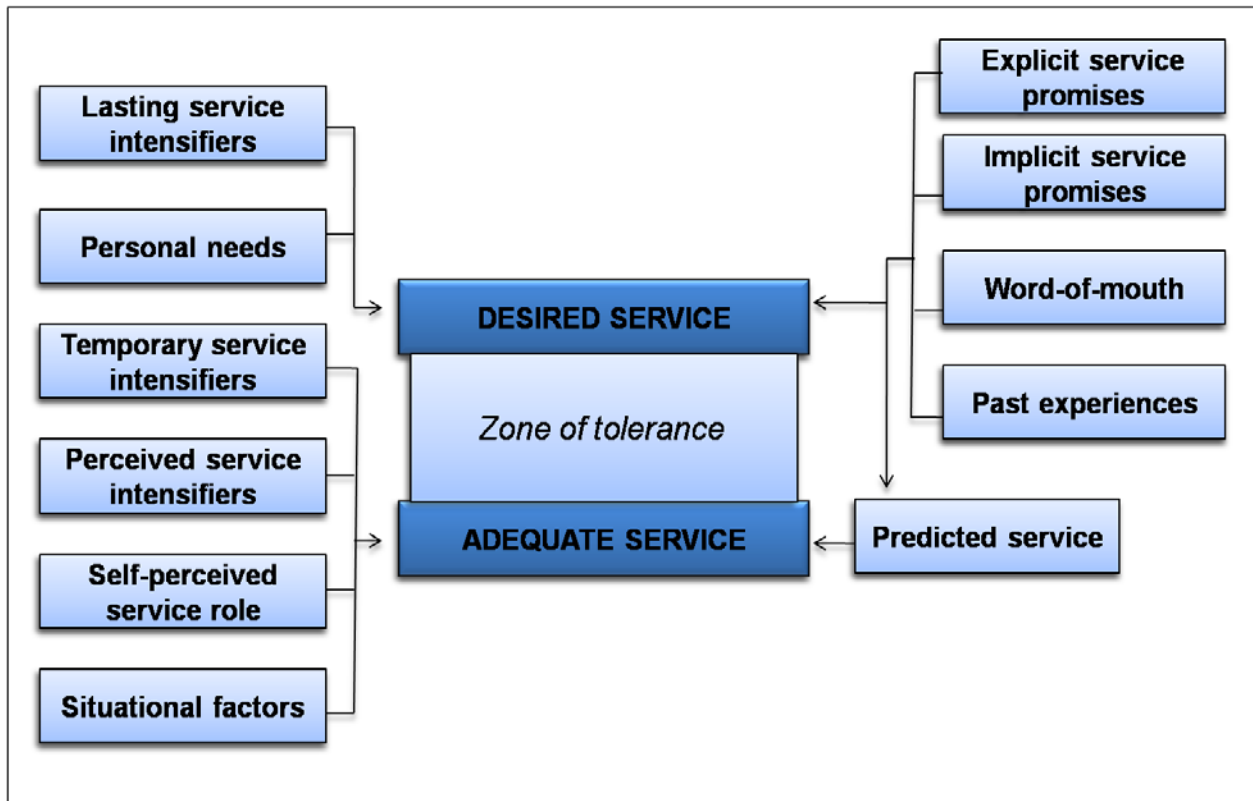
Various factors can influence the service expectations of customers, as shown in Figure 3.4.

Desired service expectations develop as a result of six different sources (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006:324), among which personal needs and beliefs about services are the two most significant influences (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:60).

The first source, according to Hoffman *et al.* (2009:389), entails enduring service intensifiers which are personal factors that increase a customers' sensitivity on the performance of a service over time. Wilson *et al.* (2008:61) explain that enduring service intensifiers are individual and lasting factors which lead to sensitivity regarding service performances.

Enduring service intensifiers consist of two types, including the customers' derived expectations and personal service philosophies. Customer-derived expectations entail that the customers' expectations are based on the expectations of others.

**Figure 3.4: Factors that influence service expectations**



**Source: Wilson et al. (2008:64)**

Personal service philosophies is the customers' own views of the meaning of the service and the manner in which service businesses should perform (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006:324). Wilson et al. (2008:61) confirm this by explaining that derived service expectations are driven by another person or group of people, while personal service philosophies are customers' individual original basic feelings and attitudes about the service and the appropriate performance of service businesses.

The second factor, according to Hoffman and Bateson (2006:325) that can influence service expectations, entails the customers' own personal needs which include physical, social and psychological desires. Personal needs are crucial factors that shape customers' desires and refer to those states or conditions that are essential to the physical or psychological well-being of the customer (Ziethaml, 2009:82). Furthermore,

personal emergency situations in which services are urgently needed, raise the level of customer service expectations (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:61).

The next factor encompasses explicit service promises, which are personal or non-personal statements to customers about the service offered by service businesses (Ziethaml *et al.*, 2009:89). Explicit service promises include the service business' advertising, personal selling contracts and other forms of communication that a service business commits itself to (Hoffman *et al.*, 2009:391). Wilson *et al.* (2008:65) state that those service businesses that promise precisely what they will ultimately be able to deliver are a correct approach to manage customer expectations. This approach will ensure that the reality of the service performance matches the customer's expectations of the service.

According to Ziethaml *et al.* (2009:325), implicit services refer to those obligations to which the service business commits, via the tangibles surrounding the service and the price of the service. Wilson *et al.* (2008:66) explain this by stating that the higher the price of the service and the more impressive the tangibles are the, more the customer will expect from the service.

The second last factor, according to Hoffman *et al.* (2009:391), is word-of-mouth communication, which plays an important role in forming customer service expectations and includes personal sources of information such as the service experience of friends, family or consultants. Word-of-mouth communication is especially important in service performances that are difficult to evaluate before purchase (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:66).

Finally, the customer's past experience also add to customer expectations and is based on a comparison of the current service encounter with other encounters with the same service businesses, other service businesses in the industry as well as service businesses in other industries (Ziethaml *et al.*, 2009:90). Timm (2005:69) states that a positive experience in the past can lead to an anticipation of satisfaction, while an unpleasant experience might lead to a judgement that the service will be similar.

Service businesses can use the information regarding the factors that influence customer expectations with a view to improve, develop and market their services more efficiently (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:66).

Service businesses, including fitness facilities, can influence the various factors that determine customer expectations as shown in Table 3.2, in order to increase customer satisfaction with services.

**Table 3.2: The way in which service marketers can influence factors that determine customer expectations**

FACTORS	POSSIBLE INFLUENCE STRATEGIES
Explicit service promises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make realistic and accurate promises that reflect the service actually delivered rather than an idealised version of the service</li> <li>• Ask customers for feedback on the accuracy of promises made in advertising and personal selling</li> <li>• Avoid engaging in price or advertising wars with competitors because they focus off customers and escalate promises beyond the level at which they can be met</li> <li>• Formalise service promises through a service guarantee that focuses employees on the promise and that provides feedback on the number of times promises are not fulfilled.</li> </ul>
Implicit service promises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that service tangibles accurately reflect the type and level of services provided</li> <li>• Ensure that price premiums can be justified by higher levels of performance by the service organisation on important customer attributes</li> </ul>
Lasting service intensifiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use market research to determine sources of derived service expectations and their requirements. Focus advertising and marketing strategy on ways the service allows the focal customer to satisfy the requirements if the influencing customer</li> <li>• Use market research to profile personal service philosophies of customers and use this information in designing and delivering services</li> </ul>
Personal needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate customers on ways the service addresses their needs</li> </ul>
Temporary service intensifiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase service delivery during peak periods or emergencies</li> </ul>

**Source: Wilson *et al.* (2008:67)**

**Table 3.2: The way in which service marketers can influence factors that determine customer expectations (continued)**

FACTORS	POSSIBLE INFLUENCE STRATEGIES
Perceived service alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be fully aware of competitive offerings, and where possible and appropriate, match them</li> </ul>
Self-perceived service role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate customers to understand their roles and perform them better</li> </ul>
Word-of-mouth communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simulate word-of-mouth in advertising by using testimonials an opinion leaders</li> <li>• Identify influencers and opinion leaders for the service and concentrate marketing efforts on them</li> <li>• Use incentives with existing customers to encourage them to say positive things about the service</li> </ul>
Past experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use marketing research to profile customers previous experiences with similar services</li> </ul>
Situational factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use service guarantees to assure customers about service recovery regardless of the situational factors that occur</li> </ul>
Predicted services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell customers when service provision is higher than what can normally be expected so that predications of future service encounters will not be inflated</li> </ul>

**Source: Wilson *et al.* (2008:67)**

The objective of a service business, such as a fitness facility, is to meet customer expectations better than its competitors can. These businesses should strive to reach the desired service level in order to establish customer satisfaction and loyalty (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:72).

Up to this point, customer expectations regarding service encounters have been explained. The next section of the chapter will focus on the perceptions of customers with regard to the service encounters

### 3.8 CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS REGARDING SERVICE ENCOUNTERS

Wilson *et al.* (2008:78) explain that customers perceive services in terms of the quality of the service and how satisfied they are overall with their experiences.

Customer perception refers to the process during which an individual observes, selects, organises and reacts to environmental stimuli in a meaningful way (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2007:160).

Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:152) confirm this definition by stating that customer perception constitutes the process by means of which a customer selects, organises and interprets stimuli in a meaningful way based on the customers' personal needs, values and expectations.

**For the purposes of this study, customer perceptions regarding service encounters can be defined as the process by which customers observe, select, organise, interpret and react to environmental stimuli based on their personal needs, values and expectations of the service performance, and how satisfied they are with the overall service experience.**

### 3.9 CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND RETENTION

Service loyalty and retention are perhaps among the most important constructs in service marketing, according to Javadein *et al.* (2008:4). The focus of customer loyalty is to make customers feel good about their relationship with the business (Garrett, 2006:35).

#### 3.9.1 Defining customer loyalty

Different definitions for customer loyalty can be identified in literature.



Customer loyalty is defined by Javadein *et al.* (2008:4) as a positive attitude towards the business and the recommendation of the business to other customers and the display of repurchase behaviour.

Another definition of customer loyalty is that of Timm (2005:15) who states that true customer loyalty refers to a customer's overall satisfaction and commitment to strengthen the relationship as well as the intent to repeat purchases and recommend the business to others.

Customer loyalty can also be defined as the customer's intention or tendency to make a purchase (Johnson & Gustafsson, 2000:7).

**Customer loyalty, for this study, will therefore refer to the customers' positive attitude and overall satisfaction and commitment towards the fitness facility with the intent to make repeat purchases and recommend the fitness facility to other customers.**

### 3.9.2 Types of customer loyalty

Different types of customer loyalty can be identified, as shown in Table 3.3 and which will be explained in the next section. Fill (2005:251) proposes that customers are capable of changing degrees of loyalty. The author also suggests that customers exhibit elements of curiosity in their purchase habits, enjoy variety and are happy to change brands as a result of a business's marketing communications.

Monopoly loyalty means that customers are loyal to the business because they do not have any other choice. This means that they are resentful and totally uncommitted to the business (Hill & Alexander, 2000:14). Fill (2005:251) suggests that monopoly loyalty is not a true form of loyalty, because customers do not have any purchase choice.

**Table 3.3: Types of customer loyalty**

<b>Types of customer loyalty</b>	<b>Degree of customer commitment</b>
Monopoly loyalty	Low
Cost of change loyalty	Medium
Incentivised loyalty	Low to medium
Habitual loyalty	Low
Committed loyalty	High

**Source: Adapted from Hill and Alexander (2000:14)**

Cost of change loyalty, on the other hand, occurs when it is really difficult and costly for the customer to change to another business; customers will only do so as a last resort. This means that such customers have a low level of commitment with regard to the business (Hill & Alexander, 2000:14). According to Fill (2005:251), this form of loyalty is driven by the customers' cautious management of money and financial necessity, and is not a true form of loyalty.

Incentivised loyalty is used by service businesses to reward customers for their purchases. According to Kumar and Shah (2004:318), this means that the more customers spend at the service business, the more rewards they can earn. Fill (2005:251) explains that these customers do not have one favourite brand and subsequently, again, such customers are not truly loyal to the business.

Habitual loyalty is one of the most common forms of repeat business; it means that customers are faced with insufficient time and this causes customers to make use of familiar routines that can be accomplished with minimal thought (Hill & Alexander, 2000:15).

Committed loyalty is known as a high level of commitment from the customer because of the business's continual earning of customer retention through the delivery of a total

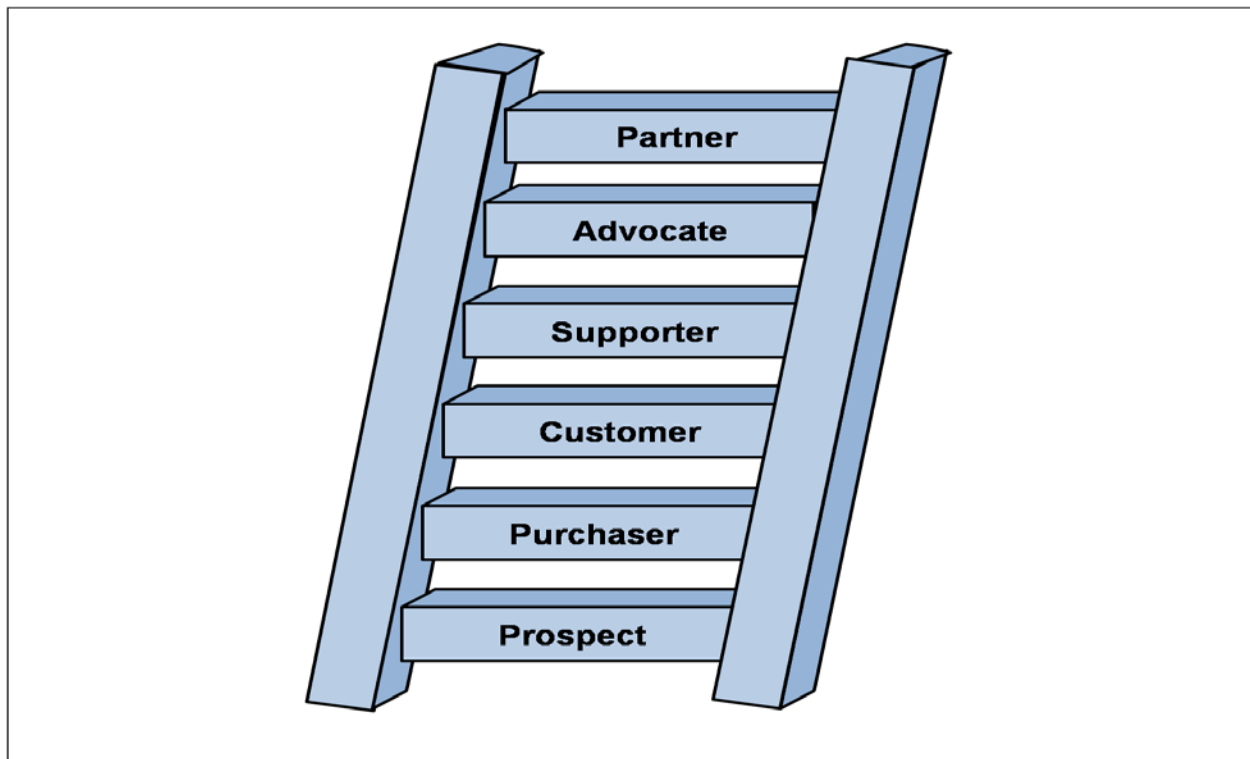
value package that meets the customers' requirements at every customer encounter (Hill & Alexander, 2000:15). Fill (2005:251) also describes this form of loyalty as emotional loyalty, which is motivated by personal recognition with real or perceived values and benefits. This type of loyalty constitutes a true form of loyalty.

To reach a better understanding of the notion of customer loyalty, it is important for marketers to grasp the various levels of customer loyalty that exist in order to increase customer loyalty within the business.

### 3.10 LOYALTY LEVELS

No matter what the loyalty type, different degrees of customer loyalty can be identified (Hill & Alexander, 2000:16). The different levels of customer loyalty are illustrated in the loyalty ladder shown in Figure 3.5.

**Figure 3.5: The customer ladder of loyalty**



**Source: Christopher, Payne and Ballantyne (2002)**

- **Partners** are the strongest form of customer loyalty because of the mutually beneficial relationship that exists in this type of loyalty, for both the customer and the business (Hill & Alexander, 2000:16). Fill (2005:250) explains in simpler terms that partners are customers who have the relationship of an associate with the business.
- **Advocates** are customers who recommend the business to others; for this reason, they actively support the business (Godson, 2009:106). This is confirmed by Fill (2005:250) who proposes that advocates are customers who does marketing for the business by recommending it to other customers.
- **Supporters** are customers who favour the business, but according to Godson (2009:106), they only support the business passively.
- **Customers** refer to individuals who have repeatedly purchased a product or service from the business and who may have no real feelings of attachment toward the business or products and services offered (Hill & Alexander, 2000:16).
- **Purchasers** are customers who have only purchased a product or a service once from the business (Godson, 2009:106).
- **Prospects** are potential customers that the business feels may be persuaded to do business with them (Fill, 2005:250). Hill and Alexander (2000:16) explain that these are customers in the marketplace who are either entirely unaware of the product or service offering or have no preference to buy.

The above discussion has indicated that customer loyalty involves more than simply making a purchase or even repeat purchases; according to Hill and Alexander (2000:16) customer loyalty represents a positive level of commitment by the customer to the business which can lead to truly loyal customers.

### 3.11 DEFINING CUSTOMER RETENTION

Hoffman *et al.* (2009:346) describe customer retention as the focus of marketing efforts towards the existing customer base with emphasis on satisfying existing customers, specifically with the intent to develop long-term relationships.

### 3.12 THE IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND RETENTION

Businesses pursue customer loyalty for numerous reasons (Garrett, 2006:35). Research has shown that customer loyalty and retention have a substantial impact on the business success.

Hoffman and Bateson (2006:392) explain that there are various reasons why customer retention and loyalty are important for businesses, including declining economic growth, increased competition, rising marketing costs, changes in distribution channels and the changing customer.

Customer retention, according to Hoffman and Bateson (2006:392), is important because of a decline in the once vibrant economic growth. Hoffman and Bateson (2006:392) suggest that this implies that there are not as many new customers as there once were, and those customers that do exist tend to spend less. Grönroos (2004:23) confirms this statement by explaining that new customers are increasingly difficult to find, which makes it increasingly important for businesses to keep their existing customers.

Increased competition is, according to Hoffman and Bateson (2006:392), another reason why customer retention is important as businesses must compete for customers in an open market.

The increasing marketing costs are also a reason why it is better for businesses to satisfy and keep their existing customers by means of customer retention (Hoffman &

Bateson, 2006:393). Hill and Alexander (2000:1) confirm this by stating that it is far more costly to win new customers than it is to keep existing customers.

A change in distribution channels is another reason that points to the importance of customer retention. According to Hoffman and Bateson (2006:395), the physical distance between the business and customers is increasing and businesses should realise that separation from the customer does not reduce their obligation to the customer.

The importance of customer retention becomes clear from the above; businesses need to realise that today's customers are different from past generations because they are more informed about purchase decisions, they command more discretionary income, and are more sceptical about the average business' concern for them (Hoffman & Bateson, 2006:395). According to Grönroos (2004:23), today's customers are typically much more sophisticated and demand more from the business than before, since it has become easier to attain information about market options than before.

Hoffman and Bateson (2006:395) highlight that businesses that engage in customer retention practices are noticed by today's customer and are rewarded for their efforts through repeat sales.

From the discussion above, the importance of keeping existing customers has become clear. This further means that service businesses, including fitness facilities, can benefit from keeping their customers satisfied with the services they offer.

The benefits of customer loyalty and retention will be discussed in the next section.

### **3.13 THE BENEFITS OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND RETENTION**

The benefits for a business in terms of maintaining and developing a loyal customer base and forming close relationships with customers are countless (Wilson *et al.*,

2008:158). Hoffman and Bateson (2006:395) confirm this by indicating that customer loyalty and retention have a substantial effect on the business's profits, and state that as much as 95 percent of profits come from long-term customers by means of sales, referrals and reduced operating costs.

### **3.13.1 Profits derived from sales**

Wilson *et al.* (2008:158) indicate that the most frequently cited economic benefit of customer retention is increased purchases over time. By increasing customer retention and loyalty rates, businesses can benefit from repeated sales; this can have a profound effect on the profitability of a business, according to Hoffman and Bateson (2006:396).

### **3.13.2 Profits from reduced operating costs**

Godson (2009:72) propounds that the cost involved to keep a customer is three to five times less than to obtain new customers. Hoffman and Bateson (2006:397) explain that a trusting relationship between the customer and the business, resulting from customer retention and loyalty programmes, makes existing customers more receptive to the marketing efforts of the business which in turn, lowers marketing costs.

### **3.13.3 Profits from referrals**

Another benefit of customer retention and loyalty is the positive word-of-mouth marketing as a result of satisfied customers. This helps to develop a reputation that attracts new customers to the business (Godson, 2009:77). Wilson *et al.* (2008:159) explain that satisfied, loyal customers are likely to provide a business with strong word-of-mouth marketing which can be more effective than paid advertising that the business may use.

### 3.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter described various aspects regarding relationship marketing, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The differences between traditional marketing and relationship marketing were explained, as well as the importance of relationship marketing in the health and fitness industry. Customer satisfaction was described by focusing on the various definitions of this term, the benefits it holds for service businesses, and the measurement of customer satisfaction in fitness facilities.

Furthermore, the chapter briefly explained customer loyalty and retention with regard to the various loyalty levels that exist in a service business, and the importance and benefits of customer loyalty and retention in the health and fitness industry.



# CHAPTER 4

## EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters provided background information and definitions for the concepts that are used in this study, which include services, services marketing, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

The main purpose of this chapter is to add to Chapter one by describing marketing research in greater detail, and specifically focus on the marketing research process and indicate how this process was applied to the study.

The objective of this chapter is to:

- Explain what marketing research entails;
- Explain what the marketing research process comprises of and how the marketing research process was applied in this study, and
- Explain the empirical research methodology used in this study.

### 4.2 MARKETING RESEARCH

Marketing research as defined by Tustin *et al.* (2005:7) refers to the systematic and objective collection, analysis and interpretation of information for decision-making on marketing problems by means of recognised scientific methods.

Kotler and Keller (2006:102) further define marketing research as the systematic design, collection, analysis and reporting of data and findings relevant to a specific marketing situation facing a business.

Another definition of marketing research is that it is the function which links the consumer, customer and the public to the marketer through information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; to generate; refine and evaluate marketing actions; to monitor marketing performance and to improve understanding of marketing as a process, according to Tustin *et al.*, (2005:6).

Marketing research, according to Peter and Donnelly (2008:28), is the process by which information about the marketing environment is generated, analysed and interpreted for use in marketing decision-making.

**From these definitions it can be suggested that marketing research is the systematic and objective design, collection, analysis and reporting of data by means of which information regarding the marketing environment is generated, analysed and interpreted with the objective to monitor marketing actions and performance. Marketing research also improves the understanding of marketing as a process, which will assist businesses towards making marketing decisions, including the identification of marketing problems and opportunities.**

#### 4.3 IMPORTANCE OF MARKETING RESEARCH

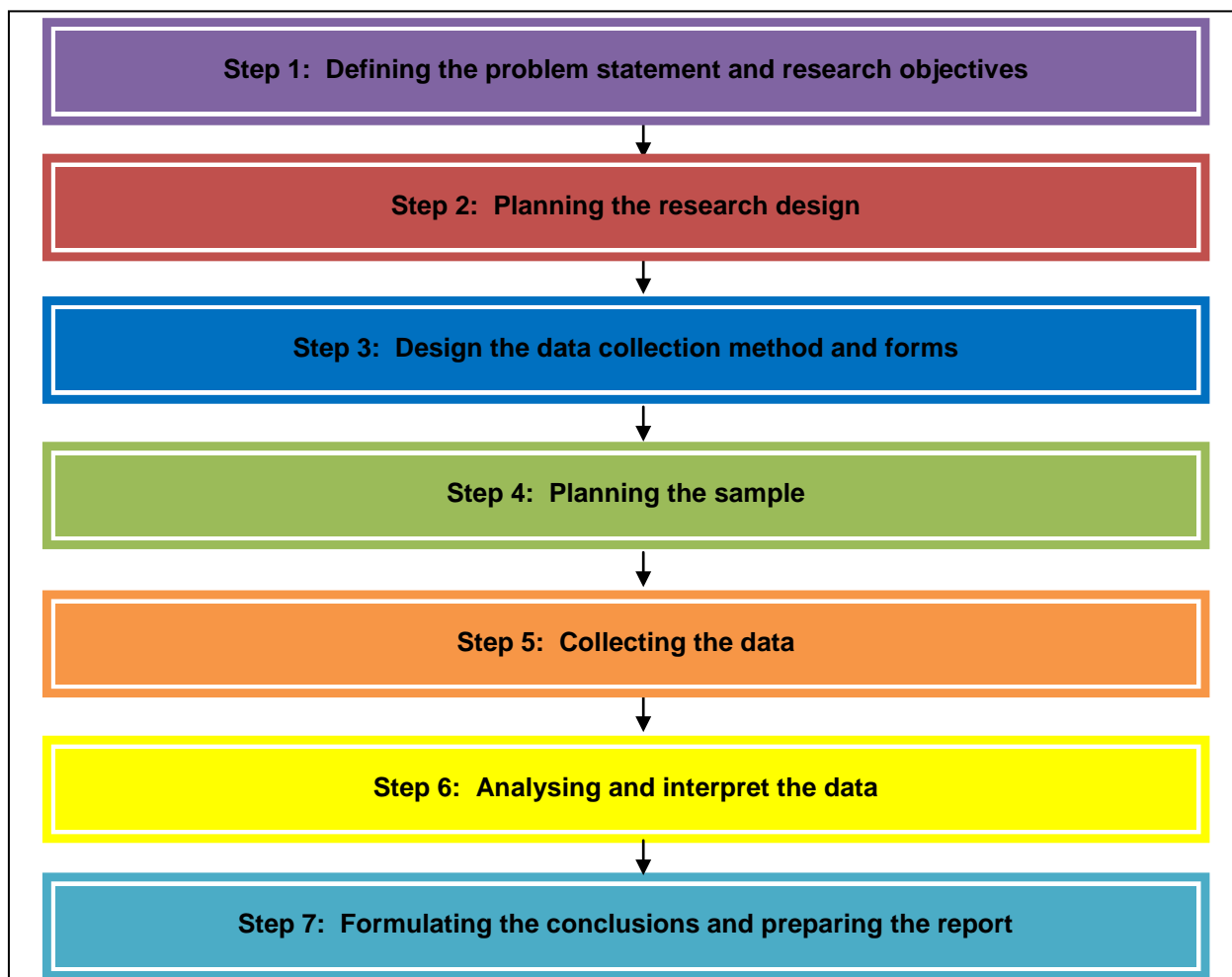
Marketers need to make the most of opportunities and concomitantly decrease threats in order to survive in today's highly competitive global economy. Marketing managers therefore need current, reliable and useful information regarding the marketing environment in order to make effective decisions (Peter & Donnelly, 2008:28).

Tustin *et al.* (2005:22) explain that businesses in the marketing environment in particular need accurate data which will make it possible for them to plan properly and take appropriate action.

#### 4.4 MARKETING RESEARCH PROCESS

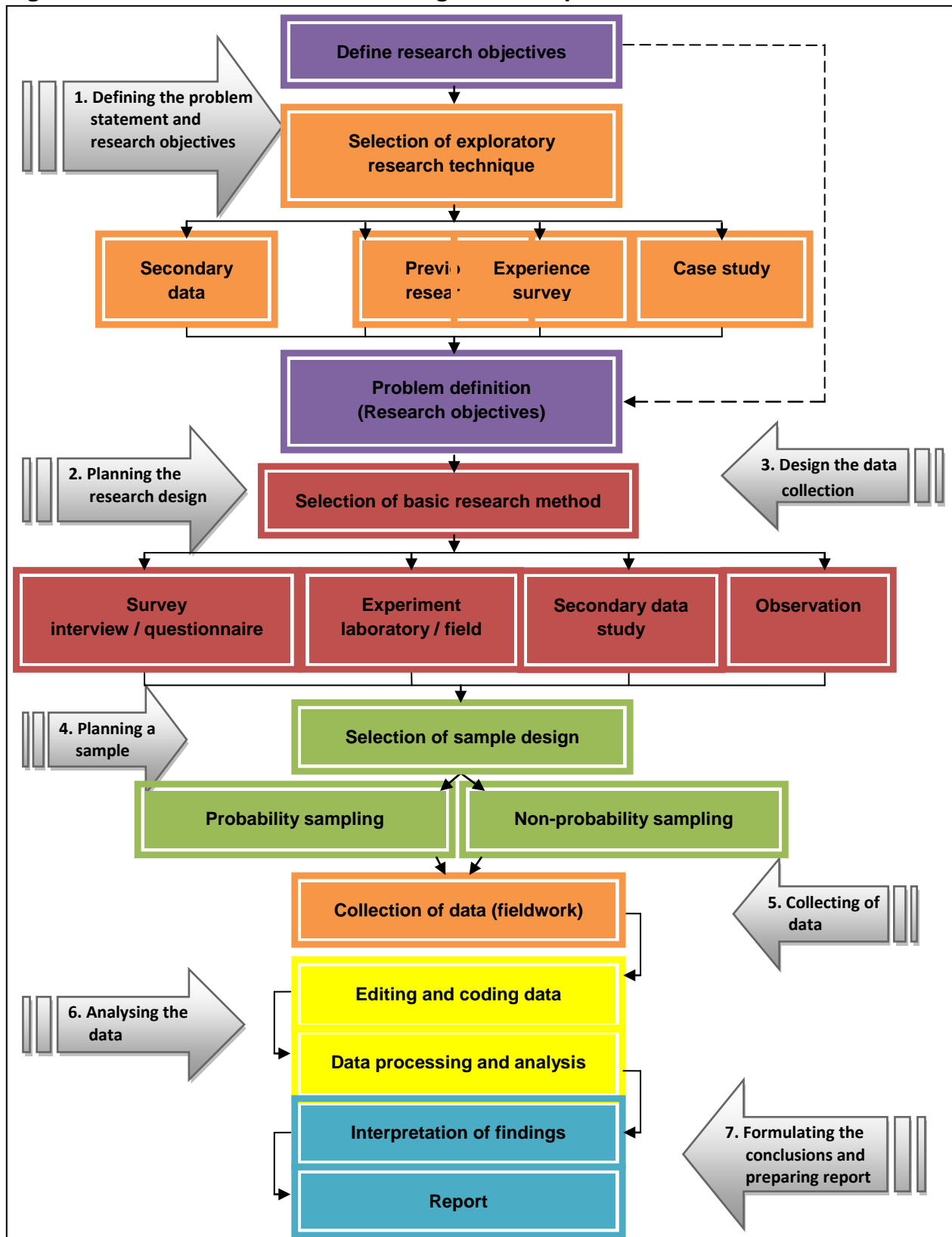
every marketing research programme is unique according to circumstances, but there is a sequence of steps that needs to be followed when the research project is planned according to Churchill and Iacobucci (2005:39). This sequence of steps is called the marketing research process. The current study made use of the stages of the research process that are presented by Zikmund and Babin (2007:59) as shown in Figure 4.1, together with a flowchart of the process presented in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.1: Stages in the marketing research process**



**Source: Adapted from Zikmund and Babin (2007:59) and Churchill and Iacobucci (2005:40)**

**Figure 4.2: Flowchart of the marketing research process**



Source: Adapted from Zikmund (2003:55)

#### **4.4.1 STAGE 1: DEFINING THE PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The following section will present the definition of the problem statement and the research objectives.

##### **4.4.1.1 Defining the problem statement**

The first step in marketing research, according to Peter and Donnelly (2008:28), is to determine the reason why the research is necessary and what it aims to accomplish. The role of this stage is therefore to define the marketing problem that needs to be solved (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005:40). During the problem definition stage, the researcher obtains a clear picture of the purpose of the research and sets accurate research objectives which will, according to William and Zikmund (2003:55), improve the chances of collecting the relevant and necessary information.

Marketing researchers need to be careful not to define the problem statement too broadly or too narrowly, as this will result in gathering unnecessary information which cannot be used by the researcher, or insufficient information which will not be sufficient to solve the problem (Kotler & Keller, 2006:104). Peter and Donnelly (2008:29) further explain that managers and researchers should agree on the current situation regarding the problem that will be researched, the nature of the problem and, lastly, specific questions that will be investigated during the course of the research.

The literature review in the previous chapters provided information regarding the fitness facility as a business, and the problems that it faces. As indicated in Chapter one, the health and fitness industry of South Africa has not been researched in terms of customer satisfaction, perceptions, expectations, desires, attitudes, intentions and preferences.

**The aim of the current study is therefore to provide information to fitness facilities which will assist them towards gaining a better understanding of their target markets and to develop improved marketing strategies specifically aimed at the needs and desires of members of these facilities.**

#### **4.4.1.2 Defining the research objectives**

The next phase of the problem definition stage is the formulation of marketing research objectives which, according to Tustin *et al.*, (2005:81), reflect the information required in order to solve the research problem.

The following primary as well as secondary objectives were accordingly determined for the study.

#### **4.4.1.3 Primary objective**

The primary objective of the study is to investigate the satisfaction of members of fitness facilities with services delivered, through the identification of service elements which are important to those members and the comparison of these service elements to the levels of satisfaction members have experienced.

#### **4.4.1.4 Secondary objectives**

The secondary objectives of this study will be to:

1. Identify service elements which are important to customers of fitness facilities and which can influence customer satisfaction with the fitness facility.
2. Identify whether customers of fitness facilities view service elements differently.
3. Determine the actual level of member satisfaction with the quality of fitness services.
4. Determine how customer satisfaction will influence customer behaviour.

5. Determine whether a difference exists between the importance of the service elements and the levels of satisfaction.
6. Provide fitness facilities in the North West Province of South Africa with guidelines to improve customer satisfaction.

#### **4.4.2 STAGE 2: PLANNING A RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Tustin *et al.* (2005:82), the research design embodies the master plan that stipulates the methods and procedures that will be used to gather and analyse the necessary information and should be followed in order to realise the research objectives. Zikmund and Babin (2007:64) confirm these issues and explain that the research design also services as a plan of action for the research.

The following section describes the main types of research designs that can be used by researchers.

##### **4.4.2.1 Types of research designs**

Tustin *et al.* (2005:83) classify the research design under three categories, namely exploratory, causal and descriptive research (as indicated in Table 4.1). The next section will explain these three research design categories and will indicate the category that was used in the study.

##### **4.4.2.2 Exploratory research design**

Exploratory research is used, according to Du Plooy (2001:48), to explore an unfamiliar area by obtaining new insights, discovering key concepts, shareholders, social needs and consequences of the problem in order to become familiar with the problem.

Furthermore, according to Tustin *et al.* (2005:84), exploratory research is used, when searching for insights into the common nature of a problem, for possible alternative

decisions and relevant variables that need to be considered. Churchill and Iacobucci (2005:74) explain that the major emphasis of exploratory research is the discovery of ideas and insights with regard to the research problem.

**Table 4.1: Characteristics of different types of marketing research designs**

	<b>Exploratory Research</b>	<b>Descriptive Research</b>	<b>Causal Research</b>
<b>Amount of uncertainty characterising decision situation</b>	Highly ambiguous	Partially defined	Clearly defined
<b>Key research statement</b>	Research question	Research question	Research hypothesis
<b>When conducted?</b>	Early stage of decision making	Later stage of decision making	Later stage of decision making
<b>Usual research approach</b>	Unstructured	Structured	Highly structured
<b>Nature of results</b>	Discovery-orientated, productive, but still speculative. Often need of further research.	Can be confirmatory, although more research is sometimes still needed. Results can be managerially actionable.	Confirmatory-oriented. Fairly conclusive with managerially actionable results often obtained.

**Source: Adapted from Zikmund and Babin (2007:57)**

#### 4.4.2.3 Causal research

A causal research design is concerned with determining cause-and-effect relationships, according to Churchill and Iacobucci (2005:74) and is mainly conducted by means of experiments. Tustin et al. (2005:87) confirm this and explain that during causal research, the researcher investigates the variables to determine if one variable causes or determines the value of the other variable.



Even though causal research provides researchers with the opportunity to establish cause-and-effect relationships, this research design is complex, expensive and time-consuming (Hair *et al.*, 2006:64).

#### 4.4.2.4 Descriptive research design

Tustin *et al.* (2005:86) indicate that during descriptive research the who, what, when, where and how questions are answered. Descriptive research is concerned with the relationship between two variables and the frequency with which something occurs between these variables (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005:74).

With descriptive research, the researcher can create data structures that explain the existing characters of a defined target group, such as attitudes, intentions, preferences, purchase behaviours and assessment of current marketing mix strategies (Hair *et al.*, 2006:63).

**For this reason, the current study on fitness facilities used descriptive research to allow for the identification of service elements which are important to members of fitness facilities and members' desires, perceptions and expectations regarding the services they receive.**

#### 4.4.3 STAGE 3: DESIGNING THE DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Once the sampling plan has been determined, the marketing researcher has to decide how the identified sample will be reached (Kotler & Keller, 2006:111).

It is important to have knowledge of the types of data that can be collected before a decision can be made regarding the data collection method. Proctor (2005:16) explains that research data can be categorised into main types, namely primary and secondary data and qualitative and quantitative data.

#### 4.4.3.1 Secondary and primary data

**Secondary data:** According to Tustin *et al.* (2005:88), this is data that is already available because it has been collected for another study, other than the present one. According to Kotler and Keller (2006:104), secondary data provides a starting point to the research as researchers first begin the investigation by collecting data about the specific problem. This type of data is to the researchers' advantage because the data is readily available and it is not very costly to obtain. Secondary data is found in primary sources such as textbooks (Du Plooy, 2002:58).

**In this study, secondary data was used for the literature review in order to investigate and to become familiar with the research problem through the use of textbooks and reliable academic and research articles.**

**Primary data**, on the other hand, is data that is collected specifically with a view to address the research objective (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:89). Zikmund (2003:56) confirms this by stating that primary data is collected and assembled specifically for the problem at hand.

Primary data can be collected in five main ways, including through observation, focus groups, surveys, behavioural data and experiments (Kotler & Keller, 2006:105). **Primary data was also used in this study in order to fully address the research objective.**

#### 4.4.3.2 Qualitative and quantitative data

According to Peter and Donnelly (2008:30), a decision should be made whether qualitative or quantitative research will be used.

Qualitative research is used in exploratory research designs with the purpose of acquiring preliminary insights into research problems (Hair *et al.*, 2006:173). Crouch

and Housden (2003:115) explain that qualitative research, as the name indicates, is concerned with generating insightful, understanding and uses explanatory data that is carried out with only a few respondents but which cannot be justified statistically. Tustin *et al.* (2005:90) describe qualitative research as a method of seeking insights by means of a less structured, more flexible approach where researchers attempt to explore the motivations of the target population.

Furthermore, qualitative research involves face-to-face interviews with respondents to develop an understanding of what they believe and experience regarding the research topics (Peter & Donnelly, 2008:30).

Qualitative research, according to Hair *et al.* (2006:173), focuses on the collection of detailed primary information from a relatively small group of respondents by asking questions and observing behaviour as shown in Figure 4.3

On the other hand, quantitative research involves the collection of primary data from a large sample with the intention of projecting the results to a wider population, according to Tusin *et al.*, (2005:89). Quantitative research also involves a more systematic procedure designed to obtain and analyse numeric data (Peter & Donnelly, 2008:30).

According to Crouch and Housden (2003:116), quantitative research involves research techniques of representative samples, questionnaires, interviewers and data processing, which make it possible to express the results quantitatively. Quantitative research is commonly associated with surveys or experiments and places great emphasis on formalised questions and predetermined response options in questionnaires administered to a large group of respondents (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2006:171).

In order to better explain qualitative research and quantitative research, Figure 4.3 illustrates the main differences between these two research methods.

**Figure 4.3: Differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods**

<b>Factors / Characteristics</b>	<b>Qualitative Methods</b>	<b>Quantitative Methods</b>
<b>Research goals / objectives</b>	Discovery and identification of new ideas, thoughts, feelings; insights on and understanding of ideas and objects	Validation of facts, estimates, relationships, predictions
<b>Type of research</b>	Normally exploratory designs	Descriptive and causal designs
<b>Type of questions</b>	Open-ended, semi-structured, deep probing	Mostly structured
<b>Time of execution</b>	Relatively short time frames	Usually significantly longer time frame
<b>Representativeness</b>	Small samples, limited to the sampled respondents	Large samples, normally good representation of target population
<b>Type of analysis</b>	Debriefing, subjective, content, interpretive, semiotic analysis	Statistical, descriptive, causal predictions and relationships
<b>Research skills</b>	Interpersonal communications, observations, interpretive skills	Scientific, statistical procedure, and translation skills; and some subjective interpretive skills
<b>Generalisation of results</b>	Very limited; only preliminary insights and understanding	Usually very good, inferences about facts, estimates of relationships

Source: Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2006:172)

For this study, a quantitative research design was used in the form of self-administered questionnaires in order to determine levels of customer satisfaction as well as the desires, perceptions and expectations of members regarding fitness facilities.

**Pre-testing of the questionnaire was also performed during this study to ensure that the collection and analysis of data will proceed as smoothly as possible.**

#### **4.4.3.3 Data collection method**

As mentioned in the previous section, this study made use of self-administrated questionnaires to collect the required data from the specified respondents.

A questionnaire is a formalised framework which consists of a set of questions and scales designed to generate primary data (Hair *et al.*, 2006:429). Kotler and Keller (2006:107) indicate that questionnaires need to be carefully developed, tested and corrected before they are administered on a large scale; furthermore, the researcher should carefully choose the form of the questions, the wording and sequence in order for the questionnaire to be successful.

According to Zikmund and Babin (2007:219), self-administered questionnaires are surveys where the respondent takes the responsibility of reading and answering the questions. As such, these present a challenge to the researcher because he or she relies on the clarity of the questionnaire. For this reason, the current study made use of pre-testing of questionnaire; corrective steps were taken to ensure that respondents had a clear understanding of the questions and also understood how they should answer each section.

Many different ways of phrasing questions and question formats have been developed during previous research studies, according to Zikmund (2003:366). It is therefore necessary to investigate the various types of questions that can be used in a self-administered questionnaire to ensure that the right questions are used in order to gather the relevant data. This is illustrated in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Types of questions**

Name	Description
<b>Closed-ended questions</b>	
Dichotomous	A question with two possible answers
Multiple choice	A question with three or more answers
Likert scale	A statement with which the respondent shows the amount of agreement or disagreement
Semantic differential	A scale connecting two bipolar words. The respondent selects the point that represents his or her option
Importance scale	A scale that rates the importance of some attribute
Rating scale	A scale that rates some attribute from “poor” to “excellent”
Intention-to-buy scale	A scale that describes the respondents’ intention to buy
<b>Open-ended questions</b>	
Completely structured	A question that respondents can answer in an almost unlimited number of ways
Word association	Words are presented, one at a time, and the respondents mention the first word that comes to mind
Sentence completion	An incomplete sentence is presented and respondents complete the sentence
Story completion	An incomplete story is presented and respondents are asked to complete it
Picture	A picture of two characters is presented with one making a statement. Respondents are asked to identify with the other and fill in the empty balloon
Thematic apperception test (TAT)	A picture is presented and respondents are asked to make up a story about what they think is happening or may happen in the picture

**Source: Adapted from Kotler and Keller (2006:108)**

**This study made use of a questionnaire with mainly closed-ended questions in the form of dichotomous, multiple choice, Likert scale, importance scale and rating scale questions, where respondents were given all possible answers.**

**A small number of open-ended questions were also used in the questionnaire where respondents were given the opportunity to give another answer than the alternatives provided.**

The questionnaire used in this study consists of two main sections, which will be discussed accordingly.

- **Section A**

The main objective of Section A was to gather general information regarding respondents such as demographic information and information regarding their fitness involvement, including why they go to a fitness facility, the manner in which they exercise, and how serious they are about their fitness.

These questions were required in order to determine if customers with different motivations, reasons for going to a fitness facility, fitness levels and demographic differences view service elements provided by the fitness facility differently. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the questions asked in the questionnaire and the various response formats given.

**Table 4.3: General questions**

Question	Response format	Scale
Gender?	Dichotomous	Nominal
Marital status?	Multiple choice	Nominal
Age group?	Multiple choice	Nominal
Highest level of education?	Multiple choice	Nominal
Employment?	Multiple choice and open-end option	Nominal
Of which fitness facility are you a member?	Multiple choice	Nominal
How long have you been a member of this fitness facility?	Multiple choice	Nominal
How often do you exercise?	Multiple choice	Nominal
What time of day do you usually exercise?	Multiple choice and open-end option	Nominal
How do you usually exercise?	Multiple choice and open-end option	Nominal
Why do you exercise?	Dichotomous and open-end option	Nominal
How would you rate your level of fitness?	Rating scale	Interval
How would you rate your level of health?	Rating scale	Interval

- **Section B**

The main objective of Section B was to gather information regarding the importance of various service elements to the respondents, as well as the level of satisfaction they experienced with regard to each element that the fitness facility provides.

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance as well as their level of satisfaction with each element, for example a comfortable atmosphere, availability of information regarding the fitness facility, fitness programmes and membership benefits, value for money, fitness personnel's involvement.

These questions were posed in order to determine the following:

- To identify those service elements that are important to members of fitness facilities and which can influence their levels of satisfaction.
- To determine if members of fitness facilities view these service elements differently.
- To determine the actual levels of satisfaction that members experience.
- To determine if a difference exists between the importance of these service elements and the levels of satisfaction that members of fitness facilities experience.
- To provide fitness facilities in the North West Province of South Africa with guidelines to improve customer satisfaction.

Tables 4.4 and 4.5 provide a summary of the questions asked in the questionnaire.



**Table 4.4: Importance of service elements and satisfaction experienced**

Service elements	Response format	Scale
Comfortable atmosphere within the fitness facility	Rating scale	Likert
Comprehensive brochures and information regarding the fitness facility	Rating scale	Likert
Availability of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules on the internet	Rating scale	Likert
Sufficient space within the fitness facility	Rating scale	Likert
Value for money regarding the membership fee	Rating scale	Likert
Provision of membership packages e.g. student membership packages, corporate membership packages	Rating scale	Likert
Detailed information of membership benefits e.g. membership discounts	Rating scale	Likert
Convenient trading hours	Rating scale	Likert
Convenient parking	Rating scale	Likert
Convenient location of the fitness facility	Rating scale	Likert
Cleanliness of the fitness facility	Rating scale	Likert
Maintenance of the fitness facility, e.g. the prevention of electrical and plumbing problems.	Rating scale	Likert
Cleanliness of changing rooms	Rating scale	Likert
Cleanliness of training equipment	Rating scale	Likert
Availability of training equipment during peak hours	Rating scale	Likert
Working condition of training equipment	Rating scale	Likert
Variety of training equipment	Rating scale	Likert
Variety of fitness programmes, e.g. aerobics, spinning, yoga, zumba	Rating scale	Likert
Fitness programmes for children	Rating scale	Likert
Personnel looking after your children whilst you exercise	Rating scale	Likert
Helpfulness of personnel with fitness equipment	Rating scale	Likert
Helpfulness of personnel in terms of your needs and requests	Rating scale	Likert
Friendliness personnel	Rating scale	Likert
Professional skills of personnel	Rating scale	Likert
Professional skills of trainers	Rating scale	Likert
Availability of trainers	Rating scale	Likert
Involvement of personnel in your fitness progress	Rating scale	Likert
Safety and security of the location of the fitness facility	Rating scale	Likert
Service elements	Response format	Scale
Safety and security of the location of the fitness facility	Rating scale	Likert
Safety and security of the fitness equipment	Rating scale	Likert
Availability of medical assistance	Rating scale	Likert
Provision of free drinkable water	Rating scale	Likert
Availability of a tuck shop	Rating scale	Likert
Opportunity to bring guests to exercise with you	Rating scale	Likert
Opportunity to exercise in another town at the similar fitness facility	Rating scale	Likert
Availability of a locker for your belongings while you exercise	Rating scale	Likert

**Table 4.5: Satisfaction and future behaviour**

Question	Response format	Scale
Indicate how satisfied you are with the overall service provided by the fitness facility.	Multiple choice	Nominal
Do you feel that your expectations regarding the fitness facility were met by your experience at the fitness facility?	Rating scale	Interval
Do you feel that your expectations regarding the fitness facility were exceeded by your experience at the fitness facility?	Rating scale	Interval
Would you recommend this fitness facility to others?	Rating scale	Interval
Do you want a long-term relationship with this fitness facility?	Rating scale	Interval
Would you say that you are loyal to the fitness facility?	Rating scale	Interval

#### 4.4.4 STAGE 4: PLANNING A SAMPLE

During the third stage of research planning, the researcher plans the sample that is needed. According to Zikmund (2003:62), this is the stage where the researcher determines who is to be sampled, how large the sample should be and, lastly, how the sampling units will be selected.

Tustin *et al.* (2005:96) confirm the above and add that a sample is a subset of the population. It is a very important part of the sampling plan to specify the target population in order to make accurate research conclusions that match the population (Zikmund & Babin, 2003:67).

The first part of planning the sample entails defining the population, as indicated in Chapter one.

##### 4.4.4.1 Define the population

Tustin *et al.* (2005:96) define the population as a group that is used to draw a sample and which includes all the members who can provide the required research information.

As discussed in Chapter one (see paragraph 1.5.4.1) the population of this study consists of three main fitness facilities within the North West Province of South Africa where both male and female members of 18 years of age and older exercise.

The towns of the North West Province included in the study were Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom.

#### 4.4.4.2 Sampling framework

The next part of the stage of planning the sample is determining the sampling procedure that should be chosen for the study.

According to Hair *et al.* (2006:65), sampling plans are classified into two general types, namely probability and non-probability, as shown in Table 4.6.

**Table: 4.6: Probability and non-probability samples**

Probability sample	
Simple random sample	Every member of the population has an equal chance of selection.
Stratified random sample	The population is divided into mutually exclusive groups (such as age groups), and random samples are drawn from each group.
Cluster (area) sample	The population is divided into mutually exclusive groups (such as city blocks), and the researcher draws a sample of the groups to interview.
Non-probability sample	
Convenience sample	The researcher selects the most accessible population members.
Judgement sample	The researcher selects population members who are good prospects for providing accurate information.
Quota sample	The researcher finds and interviews a prescribed number of people in each of several categories.

**Source: Adapted from Kotler and Keller (2006:110)**

In probability sampling, each member of the defined target population has a chance of being selected to be a part of the study. A sampling error can be measured by the researcher, whereas a non-probability sample cannot measure a sampling error and therefore limits the generalisation of the information to the population because the members who are part of the study were chosen according to their accessibility (Hair *et al.*, 2006:65).

**For this study, a convenience sample from the non-probability sampling method was used to select members from the identified population. The reason for this decision is because of the fact that customer lists are confidential in fitness facilities of the North West Province and are rarely distributed to outsiders.**

Another reason for using convenience sampling is explained by Tustin *et al.* (2005:346) as a useful exploratory stage of a research project; members are chosen on the basis of being readily available and accessible.

Convenience sampling was used in the form of an intercept survey and self-administrated questionnaires were distributed at various times during opening hours, which meant that members of various age groups and motivations participated in the study. This led to variations found in terms of the levels of satisfaction experienced.

The sampling procedure ensured that the most current and accurate information regarding the level of satisfaction, perceptions and expectations regarding the participating fitness facilities was gathered.

#### **4.4.5 STAGE 5: COLLECTING THE DATA**

The collection of data begins once the sample plan has been finalised; according to Zikmund and Babin (2007:67), this stage is defined as the process of collecting information. The data collection process is referred to by Tustin *et al.* (2005:99) as fieldwork and involves interviews.

Questionnaires were distributed from the 17<sup>th</sup> of May to the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2010 by three fieldworkers to members of fitness facilities in Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp in the North West Province. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a convenience sampling method was used which means that respondents were chosen who were readily available and willing to complete the questionnaire at selected fitness facilities in Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp. Because of the errors associated with the convenience sampling method, some completed questionnaires were flawed; furthermore, because of the time constraints in terms of the distribution of questionnaires, cost and the small number of fieldworkers, the questionnaire was distributed to 216 respondents.

#### 4.4.6 STAGE 6: ANALYSING THE DATA

The next stage in the marketing research process is the analysis of the data. Zikmund and Babin (2007:68) define the analysis of data as the application of reasoning to identify with the data that has been obtained.

The analysis of data is an essential stage in the research process, because the analysis and interpretation of obtained data form the basis of conclusions and recommendations (Du Plooy, 2001:93). According to Tustin *et al.* (2005:102), the purpose of this stage is to interpret and draw conclusions from the data obtained. During this stage, the researcher begins the process of transforming raw data into data structures that combine two or more variables into, for example, indices, ratios and constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2006:68).

**For the purpose of this study, statistical analyses in terms of reliability and validity as well as a descriptive analysis were conducted through the statistical consultation services of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus), as shown in Appendix B. The data was analysed using the SAS statistical program.**

The analysis and interpretation of data require the determination of the reliability and validity of the study as well as the types of statistics that was used.

Although the analysis and interpretation of the data are presented in Chapter five, reliability and validity will now be discussed.

#### 4.4.6.1 Reliability and validity of data

Successful research requires that the study should be reliable and valid. Proctor (2005:557) explains reliability as the extent to which measures are free from random error and give consistent results. According to Bradley (2010:60), reliability means that the research will have the same results if the study is repeated. Proctor (2005:558) explains validity as the extent to which instruments measure what they are intended to measure. Validity, according to Bradley (2010:60), means that the study measures what it set out to measure.

Reliability can be determined by exploring three types of reliability, namely test-retest reliability, parallel-form reliability and internal-consistency reliability.

- **Internal-consistency reliability**, according to Zikmund and Babin (2007:321), represents the extent to which each indicator of a concept converges on some common meaning.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a method used to determine internal consistency where items are not scored dichotomously since each item is evaluated individually for inconsistency, according to Zikmund and Babin (2007:322). This makes it possible to identify those items which contribute to the overall reliability of the study, and those which are not.

Cronbach alpha values higher than 0.70 indicates good reliability, whereas a Cronbach alpha value below 0.60 indicates poor reliability. (Pallant, 2005:90).

**In this study Cronbach's alpha was used in order to determine the reliability of the data gathered because a convenience sampling method was applied and Likert scale questions were used.**

- **Test-retest reliability** involves the administration of the same scale or measure to the same respondents at two separate times in order to test the stability of the measures (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:322).
- **Parallel-form reliability** requires that a separate but equal to the first test should be completed by respondents (Sprinthall, 2003:480).

Both reliability and validity can influence the quality of the data that is obtained in a study; Pallant (2005:5) states that there are three main types of validity that need to be taken into account, namely content-, criterion- and construct validity.

- **Content validity**, according to Zikmund and Babin (2007:323), is a subjective agreement that a scale logically reflects the concept that is measured.
- **Criterion validity** is concerned with the relationship between scale scores and measurable criterion (Pallant, 2005:6).
- **Construct validity** exists when a concept reliably and truthfully represents the concept.

Zikmund and Babin (2007:324) state that factor analysis can be used to establish construct validity.

Factor analysis was used in this study to determine the validity of the questionnaire and also to identify those service elements which are important to members of fitness facilities. Cronbach's alpha was also used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire from the factor analysis.

#### 4.4.6.2 Types of statistics

Descriptive statistics (as discussed in paragraph 4.4.2.4 in this chapter) were used in this study.

A brief description of each statistical analysis technique that was used in the study are discussed accordingly.

- **Mean**

A mean is an average that is commonly used in marketing research and is understood as the sum total of values divided by the number of cases (Proctor, 2005:286). Zikmund and Babin (2007:432) further explain that a mean is a measure of central tendency.

The mean can be calculated by the mean of a formula, as illustrated by Sprinthall (2003:31):

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum Xi}{n}, \text{ where}$$

- $Xi$  = raw score / the measure of the trait or concept in question
- $\sum$  = the addition of all measures of X
- N = number of respondents

- **Percentage**

Percentage distribution as explained by Zikmund and Babin (2007:431) is a frequency distribution organised into a table that summarises percentage values associated with particular values or variables.



- **Frequencies**

According to Pallant (2005:49), frequencies show how many respondents gave a specific response. Tustin *et al.* (2005:523) state that frequencies entail the construction of a table that shows in absolute and relative terms how often the different values are encountered in a sample.

- **Standard deviation**

A standard deviation describes the average distance of the distribution values from the mean, according to Hair *et al.* (2006:515). Zikmund and Babin (2007:437) explain that the standard deviation is an index of a distribution's variability; it provides a formula used to determine the standard deviation:

$$S = \sqrt{S^2} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(X_i - \bar{X})^2}{n-1}}, \text{ where}$$

$X$  = each score

$\bar{X}$  = the mean or average

$n$  = the number of values, and

$\sum$  = means one sums across the values

- **Factor analysis**

Bradley (2010: 322) defines a factor analysis as a set of procedures used to reduce and summarise data. A factor analysis is a prototypical multivariate and interdependence technique that statistically identifies a reduced number of factors from a larger number of measured variables (Zikmund & Babin, 2005:608).

According to Pallant (2005:172), there are two main approaches to factor analysis described in the literature, namely an exploratory factor analysis and a confirmatory factor analysis.

An exploratory factor analysis is performed when there is uncertainty regarding the number of factors that exist among a set of variables (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:608). A confirmatory factor analysis is a complex set of techniques used in the later stages of the research process in order to confirm or test specific theories concerning the structure of underlying a set of variables (Pallant, 2005:172).

**For this study, an exploratory factor analysis was performed because of the lack of research that exists in South Africa regarding the importance of various elements to members of fitness facilities.**

Each variable is associated with a factor loading. Zikmund and Babin (2007:609) explain that a factor loading indicates how strongly a measured variable is correlated with a factor. The factor loadings show how close an indicator is to the factor; according to Bradley (2010:322), it signifies the degree to which each variable correlates with a factor:

Very high factor loading ( $>0.6$ ) *the variable describes the factor very well*

High factor loading ( $> 0.3$ ) *the variable describes the factor well*

Low factor loading ( $<0.3$ ) *the variable should be ignored*

**For the current study, factor loadings  $>0.3$  were used as these variables describe the factors well.**

- **T-tests**

T-tests for dependent groups are used to determine if there are statistical significant differences between the two groups' means.

T-tests for independent groups are used when two sets of data or two groups are compared by mean scores on some continuous variable (Pallant, 2005:97).

Proctor (2005:289) provides an example of a t-test formula that can be used:

$$t = \frac{(\bar{x} - \mu)/s}{\sqrt{(n - 1)}} , \text{ where:}$$

$s$  = standard deviation of the sample

$\bar{x}$  = sample mean

$\mu$  = population mean

$n$  = sample size

#### 4.4.7 **STAGE 7: FORMULATING THE CONCLUSIONS AND PREPARING THE REPORT**

The sixth stage of the marketing research process involves the formulation of conclusions and the preparation of the report of the results found in the study.

The following chapters will present this stage of the marketing research process where the results of the study will be discussed and interpreted.

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter explained the marketing research process by discussing each step involved in the process. During each step, the methods used in the current study were identified and explained.

The following chapter will present the results that were obtained from the study together with the recommendations arising from these results.

# CHAPTER 5

## INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of Chapter five is to provide an interpretation of the results obtained from the empirical research which was conducted, as described in the previous chapter.

The objectives of this chapter is to:

- Present the demographic profile of respondents;
- Present the results obtained from the research by describing the frequencies and statistical results from each section of the questionnaire;
- Identify the main factors which are important to members of fitness facilities;
- Present the main findings of each section of the questionnaire;
- Present the main findings obtained as relevant to the objectives of the overall study.

### 5.2 RESULTS OBTAINED FROM SECTION A OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

#### 5.2.1 Demographic profiles of respondents (questions 1 to 5 in the questionnaire)

As indicated in Chapter four (paragraph 4.4.3.3), the main purpose of Section A of the questionnaire was to obtain general information from members of fitness facilities with regard to the respondents' demographic information and their fitness involvement, for example, why they go to a fitness facility, the manner in which they exercise and how serious they are about their fitness.

The profiles of respondents can provide insight into the results obtained from the questionnaire. The demographic profile of respondents was determined in terms of gender, marital status, highest level of education, employment, as well as information regarding their fitness involvement.

The purpose of the demographic data collection was to determine whether customers who differ in terms of demographics, as well as different motivations, reasons for going to a fitness facility and fitness levels viewed service elements differently.

In this chapter, abbreviations will be used in the form of the symbol 'F' which indicates the frequency and '%' which indicates percentage.

As noted in paragraph 4.4.5, questionnaires were distributed from the 17<sup>th</sup> of May to the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2010 by three fieldworkers to members of fitness facilities in Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp in the North West Province.

A total sample of 216 respondents was obtained: Table 5.1 provides a summary of the demographic information used to develop the demographic profile of respondents.

These questions were necessary in order to determine whether customers with demographic differences, as well as different motivations, reasons for going to a fitness facility and fitness levels viewed service elements differently.

From Table 5.1 it can be seen that more female respondents (67.59%) participated in the study than males (32.41%). Furthermore, the largest number of respondents was either single (55.09%) with 38.43% being married.

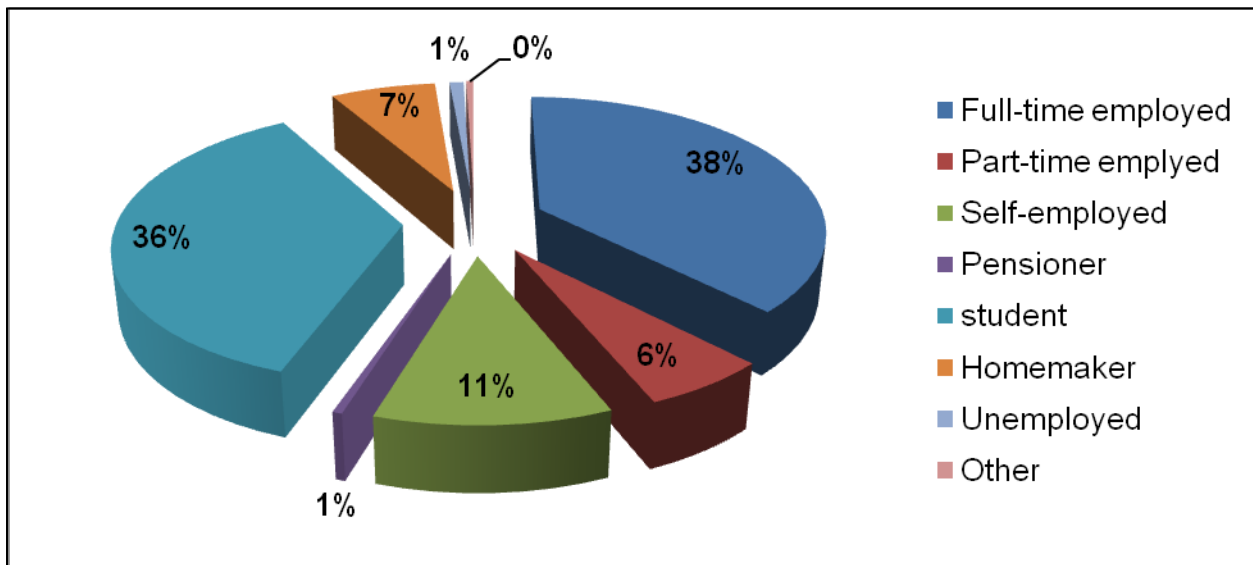
The respondents who participated in the study were mainly in the age group between eighteen and twenty-five (51.39%). The table also indicates that 39.25% of respondents had a high school qualification and that 28.50% had a university degree.

**Table 5.1: Frequency table indicating the demographic profile of respondents**

Demographic variables		F	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	70	32.41
	Female	146	67.59
<i>Frequency missing: 0</i>			
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	119	55.09
	Married	83	38.43
	Separated	9	4.17
	Living together	5	2.31
<i>Frequency missing: 0</i>			
<b>Age group</b>	18 – 25	111	51.39
	26 – 35	35	16.2
	36 – 45	25	11.57
	46 – 55	32	14.81
	56 – 65	10	4.63
	65+	3	1.39
<i>Frequency missing: 0</i>			
<b>Highest level of education</b>	Primary school	1	0.47
	High school	84	39.25
	Diploma	42	19.63
	University degree	61	28.5
	Post-graduate degree	26	12.15
<i>Frequency missing: 2</i>			
<b>Employment</b>	Full-time employed	81	37.67
	Part-time employed	13	6.05
	Self-employed	24	11.16
	Pensioner	1	0.47
	Student	78	36.28
	Homemaker	15	6.98
	Unemployed	2	0.93
	Other	1	0.47
<i>Frequency missing: 1</i>			

The majority of respondents are full-time employed (37.67%) and 36.28% of the respondents are students, as shown in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1: Level of employment of respondents**



### 5.2.2 Results obtained for question 6 on membership at specific facility

Question 6 of Section A determined at which fitness facility the respondents have a membership. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample, as well as responses from different fitness facilities, are shown in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: Respondent's membership with various fitness facilities**

Fitness facility	F	%
A	97	45.33
B	58	27.1
C	59	27.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 2</i>		

As shown in Table 5.2, 45.33% of respondents have a membership at fitness facility A, 27.57% of respondents have a membership at fitness facility C and 27.10% have a membership at fitness facility B.

**Main finding A1:** The majority of respondents have a membership with fitness facility A.



### 5.2.3 Results obtained for question 7 on duration of membership

Question 7 of Section A determined how long the respondent has been a member of the fitness facility. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3: Duration of the respondent's membership with the fitness facility**

Duration	F	%
Less than a year	111	51.39
Between 1 - 2 years	44	20.37
Between 2 - 3 years	25	11.57
Between 3 - 4 years	8	3.7
Between 4 - 5 years	7	3.24
5 years or more	21	9.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 0</i>		

More than half of the respondents (51.39%) have been a member of the fitness facility for less than a year. As illustrated in Table 5.3, the percentage of respondents who have been a member of a fitness facility for between a year to two years are 20.37%; 11.57% have been a member for between two to three years. Only 16.66% of the respondents have been a member of a fitness facility for 3 years and longer (3.7% + 3.24% + 9.72% = 16.66%).

**Main finding A2:** The majority of respondents have had a membership with a fitness facility for less than a year. This is also an indication that the majority of respondents do not have a long-term relationship with their fitness facility.

#### 5.2.4 Results obtained for question 8 on how often respondents exercise

Question 8 of Section A determined how often respondents exercise. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4: How often respondents exercise**

<b>Exercise</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than once a week	6	2.78
Once a week	12	5.56
2 - 3 times a week	107	49.54
Daily	91	42.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 0</i>		

Almost half of the respondents (49.54%) exercise two to three times a week, while 42.13% of respondents exercise daily. Only 5.56% of respondents indicated that they exercise once a week and 2.78% exercise less than once a week.

**Main finding A3:** The majority of respondents exercise two to three times a week (49.54%) or daily (42.13%).

#### 5.2.5 Results obtained for question 9 on the time at which respondents exercise

Question 9 of Section A determined the time of day when respondents usually exercise at the fitness facility. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.5.

**Table 5.5: What time of day respondents' exercise**

<b>Time</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Mornings (05:00 - 12:00)	69	32.86
Lunchtimes (12:00 - 14:00)	10	4.76
Afternoons (14:00 - 18:00)	107	50.95
Evenings (From 18:00)	24	11.43
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 6</i>		

From Table 5.5 it can be seen that the majority of respondents preferred to exercise during the afternoon between 14:00 and 18:00 (50.93%), followed by 32.86% of respondents who preferred to exercise in the mornings between 05:00 and 12:00. As the results indicate, only 11.43% of respondents preferred to exercise during evenings from 18:00 onward; and only 4.76% preferred to exercise during lunchtime, between 12:00 and 14:00.

**Main finding A4:** The majority of respondents exercise during the afternoons between 14:00 and 18:00.

### 5.2.6 Results obtained for question 10 on how respondents exercise

Question 10 of Section A determined how respondents usually exercise. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: How respondents prefer to exercise**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Alone	103	47.91
With friends	83	38.60
With family	19	8.84
With colleagues	5	2.33
Other	5	2.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 1</i>		

The results shown in Table 5.6 indicate that respondents preferred to exercise alone (47.91%) and that some (38.60%) usually exercised with friends. Only 8.84% of respondents indicated that they usually exercised with family. Furthermore, only 2.33% of respondents usually exercised with colleagues; the same percentage (2.33%) indicated that they preferred to exercise for a reason that was not mentioned in the question.

**Main finding A5:** The majority of respondents usually exercise alone.

### 5.2.7 Results obtained for question 11 on the reasons respondents exercise

Question 11 of Section A determined why respondents exercise. Respondents could indicate their preference by indicating more than one given option. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7: Why respondents exercise**

Reason	F	%
To stay healthy	189	86.26
To stay fit	166	77.57
To stay firm and flexible	149	69.63
To lose weight	135	64.29
To build muscle	90	42.65
To socialise	42	20
To relieve stress	135	63.68
Other	3	2.01

Table 5.7 illustrates that the majority of respondents exercise to stay healthy (86.26%), to stay fit (77.57%), to stay firm and flexible (69.63%), to lose weight (64.29%) and to relieve stress (63.68%).

**Main finding A6:** It is important for respondents to exercise because they want to stay healthy, fit, firm and flexible, lose weight and to relieve stress.

### 5.2.8 Results obtained for question 12 on the level of fitness

Question 12 of Section A determined how respondents viewed their level of fitness. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8: How respondents rate their level of fitness**

<b>Fitness level</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Poor	11	5.09
Fair	109	50.46
Good	84	38.89
Excellent	12	5.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 0</i>		

As the results in Table 5.8 indicate, half of the respondents (50.46%) felt that they have a fair level of fitness. Table 5.8 also shows that 38.89% of respondents felt that they have a good level of fitness. Only 5.56% of respondents viewed their level of fitness as excellent and 5.09% of the respondents indicated that they have a poor level of fitness.

**Main finding A7:** The majority of respondents felt that their level of fitness is fair.

### 5.2.9 Results obtained for question 13 on the level of health

Question 13 of Section A determined how respondents viewed their health levels. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.9.

**Table 5.9: How respondents rate their level of health**

<b>Fitness level</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Poor	1	0.46
Fair	40	18.52
Good	130	60.19
Excellent	45	20.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 0</i>		

As the results indicate, 60.19% of the respondents felt that they have a good level of health. Table 5.8 also shows that 20.83% of respondents felt that they have excellent levels of health. Only 18.52% of respondents viewed their level of health as fair, and a mere 0.46% of the respondents indicated that they had a poor level of health.

**Main finding A8:** The majority of respondents felt that their level of health is good.

### **5.3 RESULTS OBTAINED FROM SECTION B OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

As discussed in Chapter four (see paragraph 4.4.3.3), the main purpose of Section B of the questionnaire was to obtain information from members of fitness facilities regarding their perceptions of the importance of various service elements as well as the levels of satisfaction they experience with regard to each element that the fitness facility provides.

This section presents the service elements that are important to members of fitness facilities by means of a frequency table and factor analysis; the service elements with which members of fitness facilities are satisfied; as well as a comparison of means between the importance of the service elements and the satisfaction levels of respondents.

#### **5.3.1 The importance of service elements to members of fitness facilities**

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 35 service elements on a five-point Likert scale which included service elements such as a comfortable atmosphere, availability of information regarding the fitness facility, fitness programmes and membership benefits, value for money and fitness personnel's involvement in fitness progress.

The results regarding the importance of the service elements to the members of fitness facilities are presented in Table 5.10. The results obtained from the five-point scale are presented in terms of the frequencies and percentages of the various service elements, and are presented in terms of “not important at all”, “not important”, “neutral”, “important” and lastly “very important”. The “neutral” point in the Likert scale was included as there are some service elements which are not delivered at all the fitness facilities in the North West Province. This gave respondents an option to indicate “neutral” since they might not have made use of, or experienced the service element.

As illustrated in Table 5.10, the service elements that were the least important to members of fitness facilities include the availability of a tuck shop (25.70%), as well as fitness programmes for children (24.06%).

**Main finding B1:** Service elements which are not important to members of fitness facilities are the availability of a tuck shop and fitness programmes for children.

Table 5.10 also clearly illustrates the most important service elements provided by fitness facilities to members. The following service elements were identified in the study: the working condition of training equipment was proven to be the most important factor with a percentage of 84.72 of respondents who indicated this option. The cleanliness of training equipment (84.11%) was also included as an important service element together with the cleanliness of the changing rooms (82.97%), the provision of free drinkable water (81.02%), the cleanliness of the fitness facility (80.09%), the variety of training equipment (76.85%), the availability of training equipment during peak hours (76.28%), the friendliness of personnel (75.35%), the safety and security of the location of the fitness facility (74.07%), the professional skills of trainers (72.69%), the professional skills of personnel (72.09%), convenient trading hours (70.83%) and, lastly, the value for money regarding the membership fee with 70.09%.

**Table 5.10: The importance of service elements**

Q	Service element	Not important at all		Not important		Neutral		Important		Very important	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
2.1	Comfortable atmosphere within the fitness facility	0	0	3	1.39	13	6.02	66	30.56	134	62.04
2.2	Comprehensive brochures and information regarding the fitness facility	6	2.78	25	11.57	54	25	78	36.11	53	24.54
2.3	Availability of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules on the internet	10	4.63	18	8.33	55	25.46	69	31.94	64	29.63
2.4	Sufficient space within the fitness facility	2	0.93	1	0.47	8	3.71	65	30.37	138	64.19
2.5	Value for money regarding the membership fee	0	0	4	1.87	7	3.27	53	24.77	150	70.09
2.6	Provision of membership packages e.g. student membership packages, corporate membership packages	5	2.31	5	2.31	19	8.8	67	31.02	120	55.56
2.7	Detailed information of membership benefits e.g. membership discounts	2	0.93	8	3.72	27	12.56	76	35.35	102	47.44
2.8	Convenient trading hours	0	0	1	0.46	7	3.24	55	25.46	153	70.83
2.9	Convenient parking	3	1.39	6	2.78	7	3.24	49	22.69	151	69.91
2.1	Convenient location of the fitness facility	0	0	1	0.46	10	4.63	58	26.85	147	68.06
2.11	Cleanliness of the fitness facility	0	0	0	0	5	2.31	38	17.59	173	80.09
2.12	Maintenance of the fitness facility. e.g. the prevention of electrical and plumbing problems	0	0	4	1.85	20	9.26	75	34.72	117	54.17
2.13	Cleanliness of changing rooms	0	0	0	0	2	0.93	35	16.2	179	82.87
2.14	Cleanliness of training equipment	0	0	1	0.47	2	0.93	31	14.49	180	84.11
2.15	Availability of training equipment in peak hours	0	0	1	0.47	11	5.12	39	18.14	164	76.28
2.16	Working condition of training equipment	0	0	1	0.46	1	0.46	31	14.35	183	84.72
2.17	Variety of training equipment	0	0	2	0.93	5	2.31	43	19.91	166	76.85
2.18	Variety of fitness programmes e.g. aerobics, spinning, yoga, zumba	2	0.93	14	6.51	33	15.35	64	29.11	102	47.44
2.19	Fitness programmes for children	51	24.06	20	9.43	64	30.19	38	17.92	39	18.4
2.20	Personnel looking after your children whilst you exercise	55	26.07	29	13.74	51	24.17	30	14.22	46	21.8
2.21	Helpfulness of personnel with fitness equipment	1	0.46	6	2.78	20	9.26	50	23.15	139	64.35
2.22	Helpfulness of personnel in terms of your needs and requests	1	0.47	3	1.4	16	7.44	50	23.26	145	67.44
2.23	Friendliness personnel	1	0.47	0	0	5	2.33	47	21.86	162	75.35
2.24	Professional skills of personnel	0	0	1	0.47	7	3.26	52	24.19	155	72.09
2.25	Professional skills of trainers	1	0.46	1	0.46	10	4.63	47	21.76	157	72.69



**Table 5.10: The importance of service elements (Continued)**

Q	Service element	Not important at all		Not important		Neutral		Important		Very important	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
2.26	Availability of trainers	2	0.93	5	2.33	16	7.44	54	25.12	138	64.19
2.27	Involvement of personnel in your fitness progress	5	2.31	12	5.56	27	12.5	55	25.46	117	54.17
2.28	Safety and security of the location of the fitness facility	1	0.46	0	0	6	2.78	49	22.69	160	74.07
2.29	Safety and security of the fitness equipment	0	0	2	0.93	10	4.63	42	19.44	162	75
2.3	Availability of medical assistance	3	1.39	5	2.31	27	12.5	49	22.69	132	61.11
2.31	Provision of free drinkable water	0	0	3	1.39	8	3.7	30	13.89	175	81.02
2.32	Availability of a tuck shop	55	25.7	33	15.42	45	21.03	22	10.28	59	27.57
2.33	Opportunity to bring guests to exercise with you	9	4.17	15	6.94	51	23.61	55	25.46	86	29.81
2.34	Opportunity to exercise in another town at the similar fitness facility	11	5.09	11	5.09	21	9.72	41	18.98	132	61.11
2.35	Availability of a locker for your belongings while you exercise	2	0.93	5	2.31	23	10.65	42	19.44	144	66.67

**Main finding B2:** The most important service elements for members of fitness facilities include the working condition, cleanliness, variety and the availability of training equipment during peak hours; the cleanliness of both the changing rooms and the fitness facility; the provision of free drinkable water; the friendliness and professional skills of both personnel and instructors; the safety and security of the location; convenient trading hours and value for money regarding the membership fee.

### **5.3.1.1 Exploratory factor analysis in terms of the importance of service elements to members of fitness facilities**

During the data analysis process (as discussed in paragraph 4.4.6.1), an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine if there is a logical configuration in the relationship between various factors and variables (service elements). This was done in order to summarise the information contained into smaller number of subsets or in other words, factors (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2006:592). An exploratory factor analysis was used to discover simple patterns and to identify factors underlying any relationships (Bradley, 2010:322).

Table 5.11 illustrates the results in terms of the factor loadings obtained from each question that indicated the importance of service elements to members of fitness facilities.

The service elements with high factor loadings (higher than 0.3) were used to determine the various factors as the lower factor loadings (less than 0.3) should be ignored, according to Bradley (2010:322).

With this in mind, the items which correlated with each other led to ten factors being identified in terms of the importance of service elements to members of fitness facilities.

**Table 5.11: Results obtained from exploratory factor analysis in terms of the importance of service elements**

Service element in questionnaire	Factor loadings				
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Professional skills of personnel	0.85867				
Friendliness personnel	0.79865				
Professional skills of trainers	0.60277				
Helpfulness of personnel in terms of your needs and requests	0.37007				
Availability of trainers	0.4439				
Involvement of personnel in your fitness progress	0.36865				
Working condition of training equipment		0.80009			
Availability of training equipment in peak hours		0.76072			
Variety of training equipment		0.70715			
Helpfulness of personnel with fitness equipment		0.32271			
Safety and security of the fitness equipment		0.31676			
Provision of membership packages e.g. student membership packages, corporate membership packages			0.90027		
Detailed information of membership benefits e.g. membership discounts			0.73964		
Value for money regarding the membership fee			0.51953		
Fitness programmes for children				0.83061	
Variety of fitness programmes e.g. aerobics, spinning, yoga, zumba				0.48706	
Convenient parking					0.80736
Convenient location of the fitness facility					0.7073
Convenient trading hours					0.5022
Maintenance of the fitness facility, e.g. the prevention of electrical and plumbing problems.					0.4259
Sufficient space within the fitness facility					0.33422

**Table 5.11: Results obtained from exploratory factor analysis in terms of the importance of service elements (continued)**

Service element in questionnaire	Factor loadings				
	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8	Factor 9	Factor 10
Availability of medical assistance	0.68586				
Cleanliness of the fitness facility		0.76505			
Cleanliness of changing rooms		0.61679			
Provision of free drinkable water		0.50295			
Cleanliness of training equipment		0.44799			
Availability of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules on the internet			0.7843		
Comprehensive brochures and information regarding the fitness facility			0.55539		
Availability of a locker for your belongings while you exercise				0.76411	
Opportunity to bring guests to exercise with you				0.49975	
Opportunity to exercise in another town at the similar fitness facility					0.84237

### **A) Factor 1**

As Table 5.11 illustrates, it can be determined that Factor 1 involves service elements which are important to respondents in terms of services provided by personnel and trainers of fitness facilities, with six service elements pointing towards this determination.

Service elements that are included in this factor consist of the professional skills, friendliness and helpfulness of personnel regarding the needs and requests of

members, as well as the involvement of personnel in members' fitness progress, together with the professional skills and availability of trainers.

Considering the underlying service elements of Factor 1, it is clear that this factor can be labelled *personnel professionalism*.

**Main finding B3:** Members of fitness facilities viewed professional skills, friendliness and helpfulness of personnel regarding needs and requests, as well as the involvement of personnel in fitness progress, and the professional skills and availability of trainers as important service elements in fitness facilities.

**Main finding B4:** Factor 1 can be labelled *personnel professionalism*.

## **B) Factor 2**

Factor 2 as shown in Table 5.11 consists of service elements concerning training equipment of the fitness facility, with five service elements pointing to training equipment which are important to respondents.

These service elements include the working condition, availability, variety and safety of training equipment, as well as the helpfulness of personnel with the training equipment.

Considering the above-mentioned service elements, Factor 2 can therefore be labelled *equipment condition*.

**Main finding B5:** Members of fitness facilities viewed the working condition, availability, variety and safety of training equipment, as well as the helpfulness of personnel with the training equipment as important service elements in fitness facilities.

**Main finding B6:** Factor 2 can be labelled *equipment condition*.

### **C) Factor 3**

From Table 5.11 it can be determined that Factor 3 involves service elements important to respondents concerning the membership of members within fitness facilities.

Specifically, the service elements that pertain to this factor include the provision of membership packages such as student or corporate membership packages, detailed information with regard to the membership benefits such as discount, and value for money regarding the membership fee that members pay.

Considering these service elements, Factor 3 can be labelled *membership possibilities*.

**Main finding B7:** Members of fitness facilities viewed the provision of membership packages, detailed information with regard to the membership benefits, and the value for money regarding the membership fee as important service elements in fitness facilities.

**Main finding B8:** Factor 3 can be labelled *membership possibilities*.

### **D) Factor 4**

The service elements with high factor loadings in Factor 4, as illustrated in Table 5.11, relate to fitness programmes.

These service elements that have been identified as important to respondents consist of fitness programmes specially designed for children and a variety of fitness programmes for members, such as aerobics, spinning, yoga and zumba.

With these service elements taken into consideration, Factor 4 can be labelled *fitness programmes*.

**Main finding B9:** Members of fitness facilities viewed fitness programmes specially designed for children and a variety of fitness programmes for members as important service elements in fitness facilities.

**Main finding B10:** Factor 4 can be labelled *fitness programmes*.

## E) Factor 5

As Table 5.11 illustrates, at Factor 5 involves service elements concerning the fitness facility which are important to respondents. Five service elements point towards this determination.

Service elements that are included in this factor consist of the convenience of parking at the fitness facility, the convenience with regard to the location of the fitness facility, and the convenience for members in terms of the trading hours of the fitness facility. Furthermore, the maintenance of the fitness facility with regard to the prevention of electrical and plumbing problems was also included as well as sufficient space within the fitness facility.

Considering the underlying service elements of Factor 5, this factor can be labelled *convenience issues*.

**Main finding B11:** Members of fitness facilities viewed the convenience of parking, location, trading hours, maintenance and sufficient space as important service elements in fitness facilities.

**Main finding B12:** Factor 5 can be labelled as *convenience issues*.

## F) Factor 6

Factor 6 as shown in Table 5.11 presents service elements concerning medical assistance in the fitness facility which are important to respondents. This service element comprises the availability of medical assistance to members within the fitness facility. Considering this, Factor 6 can be labelled *medical assistance*.

**Main finding B13:** Members of fitness facilities viewed the availability of medical assistance as an important element in fitness facilities.

**Main finding B14:** Factor 6 can be labelled *medical assistance*.

## G) Factor 7

From Table 5.11 it can be determined that Factor 7 involves service elements concerning the cleanliness of the fitness facility and the availability of drinking water.

Specifically, the service elements that pertain to this factor include the cleanliness of the fitness facility, the cleanliness of changing rooms, the cleanliness of the training equipment, as well as the provision of free drinkable water within the fitness facility.

Considering these service elements which are important to respondents, Factor 7 can be labelled *cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water*.

**Main finding B15:** Members viewed the cleanliness of the fitness facility, changing rooms, training equipment, as well as the provision of free drinkable water as important service elements in fitness facilities.

**Main finding B16:** Factor 7 can be labelled as *cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water*.



## H) Factor 8

The service elements with high factor loadings in Factor 8 as illustrated in Table 5.11 relate to the availability of information regarding the fitness facility and fitness programmes offered.

These service elements which were important to respondents consist of comprehensive brochures and information regarding the fitness facility, as well as the availability of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules accessible on the internet. Taking these service elements into consideration, Factor 8 can be labelled *information availability*.

**Main finding B17:** Members viewed comprehensive brochures and information regarding the fitness facility, as well as the availability of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules accessible on the internet, as important service elements in fitness facilities.

**Main finding B18:** Factor 8 can be labelled *information availability*.

## I) Factor 9

As Table 5.11 illustrates, it can be determined that Factor 9 involves membership preferences concerning the fitness facility which are important to respondents.

Service elements that are included in this factor consist of the opportunity to bring guests to exercise with the members, as well as the availability of a locker for members' belongings while they exercise. Considering the underlying service elements of Factor 9, it is clear that it can be labelled *membership preferences*.

**Main finding B19:** Members view the opportunity to bring guests, as well as the availability of lockers as important service elements in fitness facilities.

**Main finding B20:** Factor 9 can be labelled *membership preferences*.

#### **J) Factor 10**

From Table 5.11 it can be seen that Factor 10 involves the opportunity for members to exercise in other towns at a similar fitness facility. This service element that has been identified as important to respondents comprises of the opportunity that members can exercise in another town at a similar fitness facility. Considering this, Factor 10 can be labelled *exercise in another town*.

**Main finding B21:** Members viewed the opportunity to exercise in another town at a similar fitness facility as an important service element in fitness facilities.

**Main finding B22:** Factor 10 can be labelled *exercise in another town*.

#### **5.3.1.2 Reliability of factors**

The reliability of the questionnaire can be derived from Cronbach's alpha values as discussed in paragraph 4.4.6.1, which determined the reliability of the data. Table 5.12 shows the Cronbach's alpha values for each factor obtained during the exploratory factor analysis.

From Table 5.12 it can be noted that Factors 1 (Cronbach alpha = 0.84), 2 (Cronbach alpha = 0.75), 3 (Cronbach alpha = 0.75), 5 (Cronbach alpha = 0.72) and 8 (0.70) had Cronbach's alpha values above the accepted cut-off point of 0.7, which indicates a high level of reliability.

However, Factor 4 (Cronbach alpha = 0.51), Factor 7 (Cronbach alpha = 0.61) and Factor 9 (Cronbach alpha = 0.50) had Cronbach's alpha values lower than the accepted norm.

**Table 5.12: Cronbach's alpha values associated with the factor analysis**

Factor	Factor name	Cronbach Alpha
1	Personnel professionalism	<b>0.84</b>
2	Equipment condition	<b>0.75</b>
3	Membership possibilities	<b>0.75</b>
4	Fitness programmes	0.51
5	Convenience issues	<b>0.72</b>
6	Medical assistance	*
7	Cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water	0.61
8	Information availability	<b>0.70</b>
9	Membership preferences	0.50
10	Exercise in another town	*

*\* The Cronbach's alpha values for Factor 6: Medical assistance and Factor 10: Exercise in another town could not be calculated as only one item was loaded onto these factors.*

The low Cronbach's alpha values for Factor 4 (2 items), Factor 7 (4 items) and 9 (2 items) can be attributed to the limited number of items of which the factors comprise and not because the scale was unreliable.

Field (2005:668) explains that Cronbach's alpha values below 0.7 can be regarded as acceptable in social science studies as a variety of constructs are being measured when a study deals with psychological constructs such as customer's attitudes and opinions. Therefore, Factors 4, 7, and 9 have an acceptable reliability as this study involves customers' attitudes and opinions.

**Main finding B23:** Ten of the importance factors have been identified through the exploratory factor analysis and have been found to be reliable.

### 5.3.2 Statistical analysis on Importance factors (t-tests)

As discussed in paragraph 4.4.6.2, t-tests are used when two sets of data or two groups are compared my mean scores on some continuous variable (Pallant, 2005:97).

In this section, the t-tests that showed statistically significant differences will be reported, namely gender and importance.

### 5.3.2.1 Differences between gender and importance factors

To determine whether statistically significant differences exist between male and female respondents, t-tests for independent groups were performed for each of the ten factors identified from the exploratory factor analysis. Table 5.13: shows the means, standard deviations, p-values and effect sizes for the factors in terms of the gender of respondents.

**Table 5.13: Importance factors and gender**

Factors	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	p-value (if random sampling was assumed) <sup>a</sup>	Effect size
Factor 1: Personnel professionalism	Male	70	4.34	0.59	0.00*	<b>0.53<sup>Δ</sup></b>
	Female	143	4.65	0.49		
Factor 2: Equipment condition	Male	70	4.59	0.52	0.06	0.25
	Female	143	4.72	0.38		
Factor 3: Membership possibilities	Male	70	4.28	0.66	0.01*	0.36
	Female	143	4.52	0.55		
Factor 4: Fitness programs	Male	70	3.59	1.01	0.99	0.00
	Female	143	3.58	1.00		
Factor 5: Medical assistance	Male	70	4.57	0.51	0.46	0.10
	Female	143	4.62	0.43		
Factor 6: Convenience issues	Male	70	4.43	0.93	0.70	0.06
	Female	143	4.38	0.89		
Factor 7: Cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water.	Male	70	4.76	0.36	0.34	0.14
	Female	143	4.81	0.31		
Factor 8: Information availability	Male	70	3.49	1.07	0.03*	0.29
	Female	143	3.81	0.87		
Factor 9: Membership preferences	Male	70	4.29	0.76	0.20	0.18
	Female	143	4.15	0.83		
Factor 10: Exercise in another town	Male	70	3.94	1.41	0.02*	0.32
	Female	143	4.40	0.97		

<sup>(a)</sup> p-values yielded by t-test for independent groups

\* Statistical significant at 0.05 level

<sup>Δ</sup> Medium effect size

From Table 5.13 it can be seen that the majority effect sizes were found were small, which indicates that no practically significant differences were found between male and female respondents. However, Factor 1 (Personnel professionalism) showed a medium effect size, indicating a difference of medium practical value between male and female respondents regarding this factor.

**Main finding B24:** The views of male and female members of fitness facilities differ with a medium practical effect regarding the importance in terms of Factor 1 (regarding personnel professionalism) indicating a difference of medium practical value. As shown in Table 5.13, it is clear that female members of fitness facilities view personnel professionalism as more important as compared to the male members of fitness facilities. This factor includes the professional skills of personnel, the friendliness of personnel, the professional skills of trainers, the helpfulness of personnel in terms of respondents' needs and requests, the availability of trainers and the involvement of personnel in respondents' fitness progress.

### 5.3.3 Statistical analysis on Importance factors (ANOVA)

In paragraph 4.4.6.2, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was described as a statistical analysis used to examine the differences among means, used with two or more population groups (Bradley, 2010:322). In order to determine whether statistically significant differences exist between respondents from different age groups and different levels of education with regard to the Importance of factors, one-way ANOVAs were performed.

In this section, only the results from the ANOVAs that showed a statistically significant difference will be reported, namely between the Importance factors and the age groups of respondents and between the Importance factors and the highest level of education of respondents.

### 5.3.3.1 Differences between respondents age groups and importance factors

One-way ANOVAs were performed to determine whether statistically significant differences exist between respondents' age groups and the Importance factors. Analyses found statistically significant differences for six of the factors, namely Factor 3 (Membership possibilities), Factor 5 (Medical assistance), Factor 6 (Convenience issues), Factor 7 (Cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water.), Factor 9 (Membership preference) and Factor 10 (Exercise in another town).

Table 5.14 indicates the effect sizes obtained when comparing respondents' age groups in relation to the Importance factors. Table 5.14 furthermore lists the mean, standard deviation and d-values obtained from each factor.

**Table 5.14: Respondents' age groups and Importance factors**

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	Comparisons significant at the 0.05 level*	Age Group	d-value				
						(1) 18 – 25	(2) 26 – 35	(3) 36 – 45	(4) 46 – 55	(5) > 56
Factor 3: Membership possibilities	4.50	0.58	109	1 – 4 4 – 5	(1) 18 – 25	-	0.10	0.12	<b>0.50<sup>Δ</sup></b>	0.04
	4.44	0.67	35		(2) 26 – 35	0.10	-	0.01	0.33	0.07
	4.43	0.62	24		(3) 36 – 45	0.12	0.01	-	0.34	0.9
	4.21	0.57	32		(4) 46 – 55	<b>0.50<sup>Δ</sup></b>	0.33	0.34	-	<b>0.50<sup>Δ</sup></b>
	4.48	0.43	13		(5) > 56	0.04	0.07	0.09	<b>0.50<sup>Δ</sup></b>	-
Factor 5: Convenience issues	4.59	0.49	109	4 – 5	(1) 18 – 25	-	0.10	0.14	0.20	0.42
	4.64	0.45	35		(2) 26 – 35	0.10	-	0.04	0.33	0.34
	4.66	0.40	24		(3) 36 – 45	0.14	0.04	-	0.38	0.34
	4.49	0.44	32		(4) 46 – 55	0.20	0.33	0.38	-	<b>0.69<sup>Δ</sup></b>
	4.80	0.32	13		(5) > 56	0.42	0.34	0.34	<b>0.69<sup>Δ</sup></b>	-

<sup>Δ</sup> Tukey's comparison significant at the 0.05 medium effect level.

**Table 5.14: Respondents' age groups and Importance factors**

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	Comparisons significant at the 0.05 level*	Age Group	d-value				
						(1) 18 – 25	(2) 26 – 35	(3) 36 – 45	(4) 46 – 55	(5) > 56
Factor 6: Medical assistance	4.50	0.86	10	1 – 4 2 – 4 4 – 5	(1) 18 – 25	-	0.04	0.27	<b>0.54</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	0.05
	4.54	0.74	35		(2) 26 – 35	0.04	-	0.30	<b>0.57</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	0.11
	4.21	1.10	24		(3) 36 – 45	0.27	0.30	-	0.22	0.23
	3.97	1.00	32		(4) 46 – 55	<b>0.54</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	<b>0.57</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	0.22	-	<b>0.50</b> <sup>Δ</sup>
	4.46	0.66	13		(5) > 56	0.05	0.11	0.23	<b>0.50</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	-
Factor 7: Cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water.	4.81	0.31	10	4 – 5	(1) 18 – 25	-	0.07	0.09	0.34	0.23
	4.80	0.33	35		(2) 26 – 35	0.07	-	0.03	0.28	0.29
	4.78	0.32	24		(3) 36 – 45	0.09	0.03	-	0.26	0.32
	4.68	0.39	32		(4) 46 – 55	0.34	0.28	0.26	-	<b>0.52</b> <sup>Δ</sup>
	4.88	0.28	13		(5) > 56	0.23	0.29	0.32	<b>0.52</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	-
Factor 9: Membership preferences	4.26	0.75	10	1 – 4 2 – 4 4 – 5	(1) 18 – 25	-	0.01	0.11	<b>0.50</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	0.16
	4.27	0.76	35		(2) 26 – 35	0.01	-	0.12	<b>0.50</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	0.15
	4.15	1.06	24		(3) 36 – 45	0.11	0.12	-	0.29	0.23
	3.84	0.86	32		(4) 46 – 55	<b>0.50</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	<b>0.50</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	0.29	-	<b>0.63</b> <sup>Δ</sup>
	4.38	0.55	13		(5) > 56	0.16	0.15	0.23	<b>0.63</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	-
Factor 10: Exercise in another town	4.52	0.87	10	1 – 4 1 – 5	(1) 18 – 25	-	0.40	0.23	<b>0.50</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	<b>0.60</b> <sup>Δ</sup>
	3.94	1.45	35		(2) 26 – 35	0.40	-	0.21	0.05	0.17
	4.25	1.19	24		(3) 36 – 45	0.23	0.21	-	0.29	0.40
	3.88	1.29	32		(4) 46 – 55	<b>0.50</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	0.05	0.29	-	0.13
	3.69	1.38	13		(5) > 56	<b>0.60</b> <sup>Δ</sup>	0.17	0.40	0.13	-

<sup>Δ</sup> Tukey's comparison significant at the 0.05 medium effect level

Table 5.14 indicates that medium effect sizes were found for Factor 3 (membership possibilities), indicating a difference of medium practical value when comparing respondents in the age group between 18 and 25 (d-value = 0.50), as well as respondents in the age group between 46 and 55 (d-value = 0.50) to respondents from the age group 56 and above (d-value = 0.50).

**Main finding B25:** Respondents in the age group between 18 and 25 viewed membership possibilities such as the provision of membership packages, detailed information with regard to the membership benefits and the value for money regarding the membership fee as more important (mean = 4.50) than respondents between the age of 46 and 55 (mean = 4.21). It can also be concluded that respondents between the ages of 46 and 55 (mean = 4.21) felt that membership possibilities are less important than respondents aged 56 and above (mean = 4.48).

Factor 5 (Convenience issues) showed medium effect sizes indicating a difference of medium practical value when comparing respondents who are in the age group between 46 and 55 (d-value = 0.70) to respondents from the age group above 56 (d-value = 0.70), as shown in Table 5.14.

**Main finding B26:** Respondents aged 56 and older (mean = 4.80) viewed convenience issues such as the convenience of parking, location, trading hours, maintenance and sufficient space as more important compared to respondents between the ages of 46 and 55 years (mean = 4.49).

From Table 5.14, it can furthermore be determined that medium effect sizes exist for Factor 6 (Medical assistance) indicating a difference of medium practical value when comparing respondents who are in the age group between 18 and 25 (d-value = 0.54) and respondents in the age group between 46 and 55 (d-value = 0.54), as well as respondents from the age group between 26 and 35 (d-value = 0.57) to respondents between 46 and 55 (d-value = 0.57) and respondents in the age group between 46 and 55 (d-value = 0.50) to respondents from the age group above 56 (d-value = 0.50).



**Main finding B27:** Respondents aged between 18 and 25 (mean = 4.50) as well as respondents aged between 25 and 35 (mean = 4.54) viewed the provision of medical assistance as more important than respondents aged between 46 and 55 (mean = 3.97). It can further be concluded that respondents aged 56 and older (mean = 4.46) viewed the availability of medical assistance as more important than respondents between the age of 46 and 55 years (mean = 3.97).

Factor 7 (cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water) showed medium effect sizes indicating a difference of medium practical value when comparing respondents when who are in the age group between 46 and 55 (d-value = 0.52) to respondents who are in the age group above 56 (d-value = 0.52), as shown in Table 5.14.

**Main finding B28:** Respondents aged 56 and older (mean = 4.88) viewed cleanliness such as the cleanliness of the fitness facility, the cleanliness of the changing rooms, the cleanliness of training equipment and the provision of drinkable water as more important compared to respondents between the ages of 46 and 55 years (mean = 4.68).

Lastly, Factor 9 (membership preference) indicated that medium effect sizes were found, indicating a difference of medium practical value when comparing respondents in the age group of 18 to 25 (d-value = 0.50) to respondents who are in the age group between 46 and 55 (d-value = 0.50) and respondents from the age group between 26 and 35 (0.50) to respondents who in the age group of between 46 and 55 (d-value = 0.50), as well as respondents from the age group between 46 and 55 (d-value = 0.63) to respondents in the age group above 56 (0.63).

**Main finding B29:** Respondents aged between 18 and 25 (mean = 4.26) as well as respondents aged between 26 and 35 (mean = 4.47) viewed membership preference, including the opportunity to bring guests as well as the availability of lockers, as more important compared to respondents aged between 46 and 55 (mean = 3.84).

However, respondents aged between 46 and 55 (mean = 3.84) viewed membership preference as more important than respondents aged 56 and older (mean = 4.38).

From Table 5.14, it can also be determined that medium effect sizes exist for Factor 10 (exercise in another town) indicating a difference of medium practical value when comparing respondents from the age group of 18 to 25 (d-value = 0.50) and respondents who are in the age group of 46 to 55 (d-value = 0.50), as well as respondents who are aged between 18 and 25 (d-value = 0.60) to respondents who are in the age group above 56 (d-value = 0.60).

**Main finding B30:** Respondents aged between 18 and 25 (mean = 4.52) viewed the opportunity to exercise in another town as more important compared to respondents aged between 46 and 55 (mean = 3.88), as well as respondents aged 56 years and older (mean = 3.69).

The remaining effect sizes listed in Table 5.14 were small when comparing respondents' age groups to the Importance factors.

#### 5.3.3.2 Differences between respondents' levels of education and Importance factors

One-way ANOVAs were performed to determine whether statistically significant differences exist between respondents' levels of education and the Importance factors. Analyses found statistical significant differences for Factor 8 which related to the availability of information.

Table 5.15 indicates the effect sizes obtained when comparing respondents' levels of education in relation to the Importance factors. Table 5.15 furthermore lists the mean, standard deviation and d-values obtained for Factor 8.

**Table 5.15: Respondents level of education and importance factors**

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	Comparisons significant at the 0.05 level*	Level of education	d-value			
						(1) High school	(2) Diploma	(3) University degree	(4) Post-graduate
Factor 8: Information availability	3.88	0.90	84	1 – 4 2 – 4	(1) High school	-	0.14	0.26	<b>0.62<sup>△</sup></b>
	3.74	1.01	42		(2) Diploma	0.14	-	0.10	<b>0.50<sup>△</sup></b>
	3.64	0.89	61		(3) University degree	0.26	0.10	-	0.39
	3.25	1.00	26		(4) Post-graduate	<b>0.62<sup>△</sup></b>	<b>0.50<sup>△</sup></b>	0.39	-

<sup>△</sup> Tukey's comparison significant at the 0.05 medium effect level

Table 5.15 indicates that medium effect sizes were found for Factor 8 (Information availability) indicating a difference of medium practical value, when comparing respondents who have completed high school (d-value = 0.62) and respondents who have completed a post-graduate degree (d-value = 0.62), as well as respondents who have a diploma (d-value = 0.50) to respondents who have a post-graduate degree (d-value = 0.50).

The remaining effect sizes listed in Table 5.15 were small when comparing respondents' level of education to the Importance factors. From the above results, the following main finding can be reported:

**Main finding B31:** Respondents who have a high school qualification (mean = 3.88), as well as respondents who have a diploma (mean = 3.74) viewed the availability of information including the information of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules accessible on the internet as more important compared to those respondents who have a post-graduate degree (mean = 3.64).

#### 5.3.4 The satisfaction levels of respondents of fitness facilities regarding service elements

The second part of Section B indicates how satisfied members of fitness facilities were with the services provided. Respondents were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction with each of the 35 service elements on a five-point Likert scale, which included service elements such as a comfortable atmosphere, availability of information regarding the fitness facility, fitness programmes and membership benefits, value for money, and fitness personnel's involvement.

The results pertaining to the level of satisfaction of members with regard to the service elements are presented in Table 5.16. The results obtained from the five-point scale are presented in terms of the frequencies and percentages of the various service elements, and are according to answers indicating "not satisfied at all", "not satisfied", "neutral", "satisfied" and lastly "very satisfied".

As illustrated in Table 5.16, the service elements with which members of fitness facilities were the least satisfied include the availability of a tuck shop (18.57% + 8.1% = 26.67%), services with regard to personnel who look after members' children while they exercise (10.5% + 11% = 21.05%), the availability of training equipment in peak hours (7.94% + 19.62% = 27.56%), fitness programmes for children (9% + 9% = 18%) and the opportunity to exercise in another town at the same fitness facility (9.77% + 7.44% = 17.21%).

**Main finding B32:** Service elements with which members of fitness facilities were not satisfied are the availability of a tuck shop, personnel that look after children while members exercise; the availability of training equipment in peak hours, the availability of fitness programmes for children and the opportunity to exercise in another town at the same fitness facility.

**Table 5.16: The satisfaction levels regarding service elements**

Q	Service element	Not Satisfied at all		Not Satisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
2.1	Comfortable atmosphere within the fitness facility	0	0	4	1.85	27	12.5	89	41.2	96	44.44
2.2	Comprehensive brochures and information regarding the fitness facility	3	1.4	12	5.58	64	29.77	87	40.47	49	22.79
2.3	Availability of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules on the internet	2	0.93	20	9.3	71	33.02	67	31.16	55	25.58
2.4	Sufficient space within the fitness facility	3	1.4	14	6.51	31	14.42	88	40.93	79	36.74
2.5	Value for money regarding the membership fee	1	0.47	16	7.44	27	12.56	80	37.21	91	42.33
2.6	Provision of membership packages e.g. student membership packages, corporate membership packages	1	0.46	13	6.02	59	27.31	73	33.8	70	32.41
2.7	Detailed information of membership benefits e.g. membership discounts	3	1.4	21	9.77	57	26.51	73	33.95	61	28.37
2.8	Convenient trading hours	2	0.93	14	6.48	20	9.26	73	33.8	107	49.54
2.9	Convenient parking	4	1.86	11	5.12	12	5.58	69	32.09	119	55.35
2.1	Convenient location of the fitness facility	1	0.46	6	2.78	19	8.8	67	31.02	123	56.94
2.11	Cleanliness of the fitness facility	0	0	4	1.85	20	9.26	75	34.72	117	54.17
2.12	Maintenance of the fitness facility. e.g. the prevention of electrical and plumbing problems	1	0.47	2	0.94	23	10.8	92	43.19	95	44.6
2.13	Cleanliness of changing rooms	1	0.47	3	1.4	24	11.16	73	33.95	114	53.02
2.14	Cleanliness of training equipment	3	1.4	7	3.26	18	8.37	87	40.47	100	46.51
2.15	Availability of training equipment in peak hours	17	7.94	25	11.68	39	18.22	67	31.31	66	30.84
2.16	Working condition of training equipment	7	3.26	9	4.19	31	14.42	80	37.21	88	40.93
2.17	Variety of training equipment	1	0.46	7	3.24	18	8.33	86	39.81	104	48.15
2.18	Variety of fitness programmes e.g. aerobics, spinning, yoga, zumba	5	2.33	15	6.98	44	20.47	76	35.35	75	34.88
2.19	Fitness programmes for children	19	9	19	9	100	47.39	43	20.38	30	14.22
2.2	Personnel looking after your children whilst you exercise	21	10.05	23	11	78	37.32	45	21.53	42	20.1
2.21	Helpfulness of personnel with fitness equipment	4	1.85	16	7.41	42	19.44	66	30.56	88	40.74
2.22	Helpfulness of personnel in terms of your needs and requests	3	1.4	11	5.12	31	14.42	78	36.28	92	42.79
2.23	Friendliness personnel	4	1.86	6	2.79	18	8.37	61	28.37	126	58.6
2.24	Professional skills of personnel	2	0.93	8	3.72	33	15.35	73	33.95	99	46.05
2.25	Professional skills of trainers	1	0.47	4	1.86	33	15.35	71	33.02	106	49.3

**Table 5.16: The satisfaction levels regarding service elements (Continued)**

Q	Service element	Not Satisfied at all		Not Satisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
2.26	Availability of trainers	2	0.93	12	5.61	40	18.69	63	29.44	97	45.33
2.27	Involvement of personnel in your fitness progress	4	1.85	16	7.41	54	25	66	30.56	76	35.19
2.28	Safety and security of the location of the fitness facility	0	0	6	2.8	20	9.35	77	35.98	111	51.87
2.29	Safety and security of the fitness equipment	2	0.93	4	1.86	17	7.91	77	35.81	115	53.49
2.3	Availability of medical assistance	13	6.13	18	8.49	65	30.66	56	26.42	60	28.3
2.31	Provision of free drinkable water	5	2.33	2	0.93	7	3.26	27	12.56	174	80.93
2.32	Availability of a tuck shop	39	18.57	17	8.1	41	19.52	39	18.57	74	35.24
2.33	Opportunity to bring guests to exercise with you	13	6.02	23	10.65	55	25.46	58	26.85	67	31.02
2.34	Opportunity to exercise in another town at the similar fitness facility	21	9.77	16	7.44	44	20.47	42	19.53	92	42.79
2.35	Availability of a locker for your belongings while you exercise	0	0	4	1.86	28	13.02	62	28.84	121	56.28

Table 5.16 also shows those service elements with which members of fitness facilities were most satisfied. The following service elements with which members were satisfied have been identified: safety and security of the training equipment with a percentage of 89.30% (35.81% + 53.49% = 89.30%), the cleanliness of the fitness facility (34.72% + 54.17% = 88.89%), the convenience of the location of the fitness facility (31.02% + 56.94% = 87.96%), the variety of training equipment available (39.81% + 48.15% = 87.96%), the maintenance of the fitness facility (43.19% + 44.60% = 87.79%) with regard to the prevention of electrical and plumbing problems, the safety and security of the location of the fitness facility (35.98% + 51.87% = 87.85%), the convenience of parking at the fitness facility (32.09% + 55.35% = 87.44%), the cleanliness of training equipment (40.47% + 46.51% = 86.97%), the cleanliness of changing rooms in the fitness facility (33.95% + 53.02% = 86.97%) as well as the friendliness of personnel with a percentage of 86.97% (28.37% + 58.60% = 86.97%).

**Main finding B33:** The service elements with which members of fitness facilities were most satisfied include the variety, cleanliness and safety and security of the training equipment, the cleanliness of the fitness facility and changing rooms, the friendliness of personnel and the parking, location, maintenance and safety and security of the location of the fitness facility.

#### 5.3.4.1 Comparison between importance and satisfaction

One of the secondary objectives for the study is to determine whether a difference existed in terms of the importance of service elements and the level of satisfaction. In this section a paired t-test was performed to achieve the above-mentioned objective.

Table 5.17 presents the findings from the paired t-test and displays the means, standard deviations and mean of difference and effect sizes between means for the factors in terms of the importance and satisfaction with these factors.

**Table 5.17: Paired t-test for comparing importance and satisfaction factors**

Factors	Importance		Satisfaction		Mean of difference	Std. Dev. of difference	p-value	d-value
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.				
Factor 1: Personnel professionalism	4.55	0.55	4.17	0.75	0.38	0.75	0.00	0.50
Factor 2: Equipment condition	4.68	0.43	4.10	0.76	0.60	0.73	0.00	<b>0.80<sup>△</sup></b>
Factor 3: Membership possibilities	4.44	0.59	4.03	0.73	0.41	0.67	0.00	0.56
Factor 4: Fitness programmes	3.58	1.00	3.58	0.86	0.00	1.17	0.95	0.00
Factor 5: Convenience issues	4.60	0.46	4.27	0.56	0.34	0.60	0.00	0.61
Factor 6: Medical assistance	4.39	0.89	3.62	1.16	0.80	1.30	0.00	0.70
Factor 7: Cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water	4.79	0.32	4.43	0.59	0.36	0.60	0.00	0.61
Factor 8: Information availability	3.71	0.94	3.74	0.83	0.03	0.06	0.66	0.03
Factor 9: Membership preferences	4.48	0.85	4.39	0.78	0.11	0.89	0.79	0.13
Factor 10: Exercise in another town	4.26	1.14	3.78	1.33	0.47	0.60	0.00	0.40

<sup>△</sup> Large and practically significant

From Table 5.17 it can be determined that a large d-value of 0.80 was obtained for Factor 2 (equipment condition), which indicates that a practically significant difference exists between the mean of importance and the mean of satisfaction with regard to this factor. This implies that although Factor 2 was important to respondents (mean = 4.68), respondents were practically significant less satisfied (mean = 4.10) with this factor.

**Main finding B34:** A practically significant difference exists between the importance and satisfaction with regard to Factor 2 (equipment condition), which indicates that although equipment condition is important to respondents, they were practically significantly less satisfied with this factor.

Medium effect sizes were also obtained for Factor 1 (Personnel professionalism), Factor 3 (Membership preference), Factor 5 (Convenience issues), Factor 6 (Medical



assistance), and Factor 7 (Cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water) indicating a difference of medium practical value.

A closer look at Factor 1 (Personnel professionalism) as shown in Table 5.17 indicates that even though this is an important factor to respondents (mean = 4.55), they were not completely satisfied (mean = 4.17) with this factor.

As illustrated in Table 5.17, a difference also exists between the importance and satisfaction of Factor 3 (Membership possibilities). This means that respondents viewed this as an important factor (mean = 4.44), but they were not entirely satisfied with this factor (mean = 4.03).

From Table 5.17 it can be determined that a medium effect size was obtained for Factor 5 (Convenience issues), which indicates that a difference exists between the mean of importance and the mean of satisfaction with regard to this factor. This implies that although Factor 5 was important to respondents (mean = 4.60), respondents were less satisfied (mean = 4.27) with this factor.

Closer inspection of Factor 6 (Medical assistance) as shown in Table 5.17 reveals that even though this is an important factor to respondents (mean = 4.39), they were not completely satisfied (mean = 3.62) with this factor.

Lastly, a medium effect size exists between the importance and satisfaction of Factor 7 (Cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water) indicating a difference of medium practical value. This means that respondents viewed this as an important factor (mean = 4.79) but they were not entirely satisfied with this factor (mean = 4.43).

**Main finding B35:** Medium effect sizes were obtained for Factor 1 (Personnel professionalism), Factor 3 (Membership preference), Factor 5 (Convenience issues), Factor 6 (Medical assistance), and Factor 7 (Cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water) indicating a difference of medium practical value. This means that respondents

felt that these are important factors, but they were not completely satisfied with these factors.

### 5.3.5 Results obtained for question 36 on the level of satisfaction

Question 36 of Section B determined the level of satisfaction experienced by respondents with regard to the overall service provided by the fitness facility. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.18.

**Table 5.18: Respondents' level of satisfaction**

Satisfaction level	F	%
Totally dissatisfied	3	1.40
Dissatisfied	6	2.79
Satisfied	104	48.37
Very satisfied	102	47.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 1</i>		

As the results indicate, 48.37% of respondents were satisfied with the services provided by the fitness facility and a further 47.44% of respondents indicated that they were very satisfied. Only 4.19% of respondents (1.40% + 2.79% = 4.19%) pointed out that they were dissatisfied and totally dissatisfied with the service they received from the fitness facility.

**Main finding B36:** The majority of respondents indicated that they are satisfied and very satisfied with the services provided by the fitness facility.

### 5.3.6 Results obtained for question 37 on whether expectations were met

Question 37 of Section B determined whether the respondents felt that their expectations regarding the fitness facility were met by the experience at the fitness facility. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.19.

**Table 5.19: Respondents' expectations are met by the fitness facility**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
No never	2	0.93
Probably not	6	2.79
Neutral	25	11.63
Yes	115	53.49
Yes Definitely	67	31.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 1</i>		

The majority of respondents (53.49%) answered yes, which means that they felt that their expectations were met by the experience at the fitness facility. As indicated in Table 5.19, only 31.16% of respondents felt that their expectations were definitely met by the experience at the fitness facility.

The results also show that only 2.79% of respondents felt that their expectations were not met by their experience at the fitness facility. A small number (0.93%) of respondents indicated that their expectations have never been met by the experience they had at the fitness facility.

**Main finding B37:** The majority of respondents indicated that they did feel that their expectations were met by their experience at the fitness facility.

### 5.3.7 Results obtained for question 38 on whether expectations were exceeded

Question 38 of Section B determined if respondents felt that their expectations regarding the fitness facility were exceeded by their experience at the fitness facility. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.20.

**Table 5.20: Respondents' expectations were exceeded by the fitness facility**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
No never	13	6.05
Probably not	23	10.70
Neutral	61	28.37
Yes	79	36.74
Yes definitely	39	18.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 1</i>		

Table 5.20 indicates that 36.74% of respondents felt that their expectations were exceeded by their experience at the fitness facility. A smaller number of respondents (28.37%) indicated that they felt neutral with regard to the question. Furthermore, only 18.14% of respondents felt that their expectations were definitely exceeded by their experience at the fitness facility. A mere 10.70% of the respondents showed that their expectations were not exceeded by their experience at the fitness facility. Table 5.19 also shows that 6.05% of respondents indicated that their expectations had never been exceeded by their experience they have at the fitness.

**Main finding B38:** A small percentage of respondents felt that their expectations with regard to their experience at the fitness facility were exceeded.

### 5.3.8 Results obtained for question 39 on recommending the fitness facility

Question 39 of Section B determined if respondents would recommend the fitness facility to others. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.21.

**Table 5.21: Respondents would recommend the fitness facility**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
No never	2	0.93
Probably not	4	1.39
Neutral	20	9.72
Yes	93	40.74
Yes definitely	96	47.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 0</i>		

As illustrated in Table 5.21, 47.22% of respondents indicated that they would definitely recommend the fitness facility to others and 40.74% of the respondents showed that they would recommend the fitness facility. A smaller number of respondents (9.72%) felt neutral about the question, while a mere 2.32% of respondents pointed out that they would not recommend the fitness facility to others.

**Main finding B39:** A large number of respondents indicated that they would definitely recommend the fitness facility to others.

### 5.3.9 Results obtained for question 40 on long-term relationships

Question 40 of Section B determined if the respondents wanted to have a long-term relationship with the fitness facility. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.22.

The majority of respondents (44.44%) indicated that they definitely wanted a long-term relationship with the fitness facility, and a further 43.06% of respondents also wanted a long-term relationship with the fitness facility. As indicated in Table 5.21, some respondents (9.26%) indicated that they felt neutral with regard to the question; a mere 3.24% of respondents (1.39% + 1.85% = 3.24%) showed that they did not want a long-term relationship with the fitness facility.

**Table 5.22: Respondents' desire for a long-term relationship with the fitness facility**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
No never	3	1.39
Probably not	4	1.85
Neutral	20	9.26
Yes	93	43.06
Yes definitely	96	44.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 0</i>		

**Main finding B40:** A large number of the respondents indicated that they definitely wanted to have a long-term relationship with the fitness facility.

#### 5.3.10 Results obtained for question 41 on loyalty of respondents

Question 41 of Section B determined if the respondents would stay loyal to the fitness facility. The frequencies and percentage results of the entire sample are shown in Table 5.23.

**Table 5.23: Respondents' loyalty to the fitness facility**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
No never	2	0.93
Probably not	3	1.39
Neutral	25	11.57
Yes	86	39.81
Yes definitely	100	46.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Frequency missing: 0</i>		

Table 5.23 shows that 46.30% of respondents indicated that they would definitely stay loyal to the fitness facility; a further 39.81% of respondents felt that they would stay loyal to the fitness facility. A smaller number of respondents (11.57%) indicated that they felt neutral with regard to the question. A mere 2.32% (0.93% + 1.39% = 2.32%) of the respondents indicated that they would not stay loyal to the fitness facility.

**Main finding B41:** A large number of the respondents indicated that they would definitely stay loyal to the fitness facility.

### 5.3.11 Correlation between attitude toward satisfaction and customer behaviour

A correlation analysis was performed in order to summarise the strength of the relationship between variables to determine how customer satisfaction will influence customer behaviour, as this will answer the fourth objective for the study.

Table 5.24 displays the p-values and correlation coefficients obtained from the correlation analysis. Only results that were statistically significant and had a medium (correlation coefficient > 0.3) or large effect size (correlation coefficient > 0.5) are discussed.

**Table 5.24: Pearson correlation coefficients between respondents' satisfaction and behaviour**

Customer behaviour	n	p-value	Correlation coefficient
<b>Correlation to respondents' level of satisfaction</b>			
Respondents would recommend the fitness facility to others	213	<.00	0.37 <sup>△</sup>
Respondents want a long-term relationship with the fitness facility	213	<.00	0.31 <sup>△</sup>
Respondents are loyal to the fitness facility	213	<.00	0.30 <sup>△</sup>

<sup>△</sup> Medium effect size correlation

From Table 5.24 it can be seen that only correlation coefficients smaller than 0.5 could be found. Consequently, no practically significant correlation exists between respondents' satisfaction and their behaviour.

However, medium effect sizes were found to determine the strength of the relationship between satisfaction and customer behaviour.

A positive correlation was found between the satisfaction of respondents and the various customer behaviours, as shown in Table 5.24. Respondents who were satisfied with the services provided by fitness facilities showed a medium effect size correlation (0.37) towards the behaviour of recommending the fitness facility to others. This means that if members of fitness facilities are satisfied with the fitness facility, they will recommend the facility to others.

From Table 5.24 it is also clear that respondents who were satisfied with the services provided by fitness facilities had a medium effect size correlation (0.31) towards the behaviour of a long term relationship with the fitness facility. This signifies that if members of fitness facilities are satisfied with the fitness facility, they will want to have a long-term relationship with the fitness facility.

Lastly, a positive correlation was also found between the satisfaction of respondents to the customer behaviour indicating that respondents were loyal to the fitness facility, as shown in Table 5.24. Respondents who were satisfied with the services provided by fitness facilities had a medium effect size correlation (0.30) towards the behaviour of staying loyal to the fitness facility. This indicates that if members of fitness facilities are satisfied with the fitness facility, they will be loyal to the fitness facility.

**Main finding B42:** Customer satisfaction will influence customer behaviour as satisfied customers will recommend the fitness facility to others and want to have a long-term relationship with the fitness facility. Furthermore, satisfied members will stay loyal to the fitness facility.

#### **5.4 SUMMARY OF MAIN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS**

This chapter presented the empirical research obtained from each section of the questionnaire. The main findings observed throughout this chapter are summarised in this section.



Section A of the questionnaire (discussed in section 5.3) aimed to gather information from members of fitness facilities with regard to the respondent's demographic information and their fitness involvement; for example, why they go to a fitness facility, the manner in which they exercise and how serious they are about their fitness.

- **Main finding A1:** The majority of respondents had a membership with a fitness facility A.
- **Main finding A2:** The majority of respondents have had a membership with a fitness facility for less than a year. This is also an indication that the majority of respondents did not yet have a long-term relationship with their fitness facility.
- **Main finding A3:** The majority of respondents exercised two to three times a week (49.54%) or daily (42.13%).
- **Main finding A4:** The majority of respondents exercised during the afternoons between 14:00 and 18:00.
- **Main finding A5:** The majority of respondents usually exercised alone.
- **Main finding A6:** It is important for respondents to exercise because they wanted to stay healthy, fit, firm and flexible, lose weight and to relieve stress.
- **Main finding A7:** The majority of respondents felt that their level of fitness is fair.
- **Main finding A8:** The majority of respondents felt that their level of health is good.

Section B of the questionnaire (discussed in paragraph 4.4.3.3) aimed to gather information from members of fitness facilities regarding the importance of various service elements as well as the levels of satisfaction they experienced with regard to each element that the fitness facility provides.

- **Main finding B1:** Service elements which are not important to members of fitness facilities are the availability of a tuck shop and fitness programmes for children.
- **Main finding B2:** The most important service elements for members of fitness facilities include the working condition, cleanliness, variety and the availability of training equipment in peak hours; the cleanliness of both the changing rooms and the fitness facility; the provision of free drinkable water; the friendliness and professional skills of both personnel and instructors; the safety and security of the location; convenient trading hours and value for money regarding the membership fee.
- **Main finding B3:** Members of fitness facilities viewed professional skills, friendliness and helpfulness of personnel regarding needs and requests, as well as the involvement of personnel in fitness progress, and the professional skills and availability of trainers as important service elements in fitness facilities.
- **Main finding B4:** Factor 1 can be labelled *personnel professionalism*.
- **Main finding B5:** Members of fitness facilities viewed the working condition, availability, variety and safety of training equipment, as well as the helpfulness of personnel with the training equipment as important service elements in fitness facilities.
- **Main finding B6:** Factor 2 can be labelled *equipment condition*.
- **Main finding B7:** Members of fitness facilities viewed the provision of membership packages, detailed information with regard to the membership benefits and the value for money regarding the membership fee as important service elements in fitness facilities.
- **Main finding B8:** Factor 3 can be labelled *membership possibilities*.

- **Main finding B9:** Members of fitness facilities viewed fitness programmes specially designed for children and a variety of fitness programmes for members as important service elements in fitness facilities.
- **Main finding B10:** Factor 4 can be labelled *fitness programmes*.
- **Main finding B11:** Members of fitness facilities viewed the convenience of parking, location, trading hours, maintenance and sufficient space as important service elements in fitness facilities.
- **Main finding B12:** Factor 5 can be labelled *convenience issues*.
- **Main finding B13:** Members of fitness facilities viewed the availability of medical assistance as an important element in fitness facilities.
- **Main finding B14:** Factor 6 can be labelled *medical assistance*.
- **Main finding B15:** Members viewed the cleanliness of the fitness facility, changing rooms, training equipment, as well as the provision of free drinkable water as important service elements in fitness facilities.
- **Main finding B16:** Factor 7 can be labelled *cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water*.
- **Main finding B17:** Members viewed comprehensive brochures and information regarding the fitness facility, as well as the availability of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules accessible on the internet as important service elements in fitness facilities.
- **Main finding B18:** Factor 8 can be labelled *information availability*.

- **Main finding B19:** Members viewed the opportunity to bring guests, as well as the availability of lockers as important service elements in fitness facilities.
- **Main finding B20:** Factor 9 can be labelled *membership preferences*.
- **Main finding B21:** Members viewed the opportunity to exercise in another town at a similar fitness facility as an important service element in fitness facilities.
- **Main finding B22:** Factor 10 can be labelled *exercise in another town*.
- **Main finding B23:** Ten of the importance factors were identified through the exploratory factor analysis and have been found to be reliable.
- **Main finding B24:** The views of male and female members of fitness facilities differ in terms of Importance Factor 1 regarding Personnel professionalism. As shown in Table 5.13, it is clear that female members of fitness facilities viewed personnel professionalism as more important as compared to their male counterparts. This factor includes the professional skills of personnel, the friendliness of personnel, the professional skills of trainers, the helpfulness of personnel in terms of respondents' needs and requests, the availability of trainers and the involvement of personnel in respondents' fitness progress.
- **Main finding B25:** Respondents in the age group of 18 and 25 viewed membership possibilities, such as the provision of membership packages, detailed information with regard to the membership benefits and the value for money regarding the membership fee as more important (mean = 4.50) than respondents between the age of 46 and 55 (mean = 4.21). It can also be concluded that respondents between the age of 46 and 55 (mean = 4.21) feel membership possibilities are less important than respondents aged 56 and above (mean = 4.48).

- **Main finding B26:** Respondents aged 56 and older (mean = 4.80) viewed convenience issues, such as the convenience of parking, location, trading hours, maintenance and sufficient space as more important compared to respondents between the ages of 46 and 55 years (mean = 4.49).
- **Main finding B27:** Respondents aged between 18 and 25 (mean = 4.50) as well as respondents aged between 25 and 35 (mean = 4.54) viewed the provision of medical assistance as more important than respondents aged between 46 and 55 (mean = 3.97). It can further be concluded that respondents aged 56 and older (mean = 4.46) viewed the availability of medical assistance as more important than respondents between the age of 46 and 55 years (mean = 3.97).
- **Main finding B28:** Respondents aged 56 and older (mean = 4.88) viewed cleanliness, such as the cleanliness of the fitness facility, the cleanliness of the changing rooms, the cleanliness of training equipment and the provision of drinkable water as more important compared to respondents between the ages of 46 and 55 years (mean = 4.68).
- **Main finding B29:** Respondents aged between 18 and 25 (mean = 4.26) as well as respondents aged between 26 and 35 (mean = 4.47) viewed membership preference including the opportunity to bring guests as well as the availability of lockers as more important compared to respondents aged between 46 and 55 (mean = 3.84). However, respondents aged between 46 and 55 (mean = 3.84) viewed membership preference as more important than respondents aged 56 and older (mean = 4.38).
- **Main finding B30:** Respondents aged between 18 and 25 (mean = 4.52) viewed the opportunity to exercise in another town as more important compared to respondents aged between 46 and 55 (mean = 3.88), as well as respondents aged 56 years and older (mean = 3.69).

- **Main finding B31:** Respondents who have a high school qualification (mean = 3.88), as well as respondents who have a diploma (mean = 3.74) viewed the availability of information including the information of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules accessible on the internet as more important compared to respondents who have a post-graduate degree (mean = 3.64).
- **Main finding B32:** Service elements with which members of fitness facilities are not satisfied include the availability of a tuck shop, personnel that look after children while members exercise; the availability of training equipment in peak hours, the availability of fitness programmes for children and the opportunity to exercise in another town at the same fitness facility.
- **Main finding B33:** The service elements with which members of fitness facilities were most satisfied include the variety, cleanliness and safety and security of the training equipment, the cleanliness of the fitness facility and changing rooms, the friendliness of personnel and the parking, location, maintenance and safety and security of the location of the fitness facility.
- **Main finding B34:** A practically significant difference exists between the importance and satisfaction with regard to Factor 2 (Equipment condition), which indicates that although equipment condition is important to respondents, they were practically significant less satisfied with this factor.
- **Main finding B35:** Medium effect sizes were obtained for Factor 1 (Personnel professionalism), Factor 3 (Membership preference), Factor 5 (Convenience issues), Factor 6 (Medical assistance), and Factor 7 (Cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water). This means that respondents felt that these are important factors, but they were not completely satisfied with these factors.

- **Main finding B36:** The majority of respondents indicated that they are satisfied and very satisfied with the services provided by the fitness facility.
- **Main finding B37:** The majority of respondents indicated that they did feel that their expectations have been met by their experience at the fitness facility.
- **Main finding B38:** A small percentage of respondents felt that their expectations with regard to their experience at the fitness facility have been exceeded.
- **Main finding B39:** A large number of the respondents indicated that they would definitely recommend the fitness facility to others.
- **Main finding B40:** A large number of the respondents indicated that they definitely wanted to have a long-term relationship with the fitness facility.
- **Main finding B41:** A large number of the respondents indicated that they would definitely stay loyal to the fitness facility.
- **Main finding B42:** Customer satisfaction will influence customer behaviour as satisfied customers will recommend the fitness facility to others and want to have a long-term relationship with the fitness facility. Furthermore, satisfied members will stay loyal to the fitness facility.

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the results of the empirical study and provided the main findings obtained from each section of the questionnaire. The results were obtained through frequency analyses, t-tests, ANOVAs, effect sizes for different means and an exploratory factor analyses. Lastly, a summary of the main findings was presented. The next chapter will provide a discussion of the results presented in this chapter.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study, by:

- Discussing the major findings of the study with reference to the secondary objectives and making recommendations supported by these major findings;
- Discussing the limitations of the study; and
- Suggesting recommendations for future research.

### 6.2 MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the satisfaction levels of members of fitness facilities with services delivered.

This section presents the major findings and conclusions reached during the course of the study, based on the main findings presented in Chapter five (see paragraph 5.4). Furthermore, recommendations to fitness facilities will also be presented with reference to each main finding.



### 6.2.1 Conclusion from objective 1

The first objective of this study was to identify service elements which are important to customers of fitness facilities and which can influence customer satisfaction with the fitness facility.

It was observed that those service elements which are most important to respondents included the working condition, cleanliness, variety and the availability of training equipment in peak hours; the cleanliness of changing rooms and the fitness facility; the provision of free drinkable water; the friendliness and professional skills of personnel and instructors; the safety and security of the location; convenient trading hours and value for money regarding the membership fees (**Main finding B2, in paragraph 5.3.1**).

After conducting an exploratory factor analysis on the service elements that respondents regard as important, ten factors emerged. The first factor was labelled *personnel professionalism* (**Main finding B4, in paragraph 5.3.1.1**) and included elements such as the professional skills, friendliness and helpfulness of personnel regarding needs and requests, as well as the involvement of personnel in fitness progress, and the professional skills and availability of trainers. The second factor was labelled *equipment condition* (**Main finding B6, in paragraph 5.3.1.1**) which included service elements namely the working condition, availability, variety and safety of training equipment, as well as the helpfulness of personnel with the training equipment.

The third factor was labelled *membership possibilities* (**Main finding B8, in paragraph 5.3.1.1**) which comprised service elements including the provision of membership packages, detailed information with regard to the membership benefits and the value for money regarding the membership fees. Factor 4 was labelled *fitness programmes* (**Main finding B10, in paragraph 5.3.1.1**). Factor 5 was labelled *convenience issues* (**Main finding B12, in paragraph 5.3.1.1**) which included service elements namely the convenience of parking, location, trading hours, maintenance and sufficient space.

Factor 6 was labelled *medical assistance* (**Main finding B14, in paragraph 5.3.1.1**). Factor 7 was labelled *cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water* (**Main finding B16, in paragraph 5.3.1.1**) which referred to service elements including the cleanliness of the fitness facility, changing rooms, training equipment as well as the provision of free drinkable water.

Factor 8 was labelled *information availability* (**Main finding B18, in paragraph 5.3.1.1**) which included service elements such as the availability of comprehensive brochures and information regarding the fitness facility, as well as comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules accessible on the internet. Factor 9 was labelled *membership preferences* (**Main finding B20, in paragraph 5.3.1.1**) and included service elements such as the opportunity to bring guests, as well as the availability of lockers. The last factor was labelled *exercise in another town* (**Main finding B22, in paragraph 5.3.1.1**).

- **Main conclusion:** After conducting an exploratory factor analysis of the service elements that respondents regard as important, ten factors emerged. These factors are personnel professionalism, equipment condition, membership possibilities, fitness programmes and services provided for members' children, convenience issues, medical assistance, cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water, information availability, membership preferences and the opportunity to exercise in another town.
- **Recommendation:** Fitness facilities in the North West Province need to focus on those service elements that respondents view as important when planning and maintaining their service offerings. This means that fitness facilities can improve customer satisfaction by adjusting their focus to those service elements that members regard as important.

## 6.2.2 Conclusion from objective 2

The second objective of this study was to identify whether customers of fitness facilities view service elements differently.

To determine whether statistically significant differences exist in terms of the way respondents viewed service elements, t-tests and one-way ANOVAs for independent groups were performed for each of the ten factors identified from the exploratory factor analysis, as the most important service elements for respondents were statistically grouped into the various identified factors.

From the t-test, a medium effect size was observed which indicated that a difference of medium practical value exist between male and female respondents. It was observed that female members of fitness facilities viewed personnel professionalism as more important compared to their male counterparts (**Main finding B24, in paragraph 5.3.2.1**). This means that female members viewed service elements including the professional skills of personnel, the friendliness of personnel, the professional skills of trainers, the helpfulness of personnel in terms of members' needs and requests, the availability of trainers, as well as the involvement of personnel in members' fitness progress as more important than male members.

From the one-way ANOVAs, medium effect sizes were observed; these indicated that a difference of medium practical value exist between various age groups of respondents and the Importance factors. It was observed that differences exist for six of the identified factors, namely Factor 3 (Membership possibilities), Factor 5 (Medical assistance), Factor 6 (Convenience issues), Factor 7 (Cleanliness), Factor 9 (Membership preference) and Factor 10 (Exercise in another town).

Respondents in the age group between 18 and 25 viewed membership possibilities, such as the provision of membership packages, detailed information with regard to the membership benefits and the value for money regarding the membership fee as more

important than respondents between the ages of 46 and 55. It can also be concluded that respondents between the ages of 46 and 55 felt that membership possibilities are less important than respondents aged 56 and above (**Main finding B25, in paragraph 5.3.3.1**).

Also, respondents 56 and older viewed convenience issues such as the convenience of parking, location, trading hours, maintenance and sufficient space as more important compared to respondents between the ages of 46 and 55 years (**Main finding B26, in paragraph 5.3.3.1**).

Furthermore, respondents aged between 18 and 25, as well as respondents aged between 25 and 35 viewed the provision of medical assistance as more important than respondents aged between 46 and 55. It can also be concluded that respondents aged 56 and older viewed the availability of medical assistance as more important those between the age of 46 and 55 years (**Main finding B27, in paragraph 5.3.3.1**).

Also, respondents in the age group of 56 and older viewed cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water as more important compared to respondents between the ages of 46 and 55 years (**Main finding B28, in paragraph 5.3.3.1**).

It was also observed that respondents aged between 18 and 25 as well as respondents aged between 26 and 35 viewed membership preference, including the opportunity to bring guests and the availability of lockers as more important compared to respondents aged between 46 and 55. However, respondents aged between 46 and 55 viewed membership preference as more important than respondents aged 56 and older (**Main finding B29, in paragraph 5.3.3.1**).

Lastly, respondents aged between 18 and 25 viewed the opportunity to exercise in another town as more important compared to respondents aged between 46 and 55, as well as respondents aged 56 years and older (**Main finding B30, in paragraph 5.3.3.1**).

It was also observed that differences exist between the respondents' level of education and the importance factors for Factor 8, which related to the availability of information. Respondents who have a high school qualification as well as those who have a diploma viewed the availability of information, including the information of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules accessible on the internet, as more important compared to respondents who have a post-graduate degree (**Main finding B31, in paragraph 5.3.3.2**).

- **Main conclusion:** respondents of fitness facilities viewed the importance of service elements differently.
- **Recommendation:** Fitness facilities need to realise that all of their members do not view the importance of service elements in the same way. This means that fitness facilities should focus on delivering services specifically tailored to various age groups, levels of education and gender.

### **6.2.3 Conclusion from objective 3**

The third objective of the study was to determine the actual level of member satisfaction with the quality of fitness services.

It was observed that the majority of members are satisfied and very satisfied with the services provided by the fitness facility (**Main finding B36, in paragraph 5.3.5**).

The service elements identified with which members of fitness facilities were most satisfied include the variety, cleanliness and the safety and security of the training equipment. Furthermore, the service elements also include the cleanliness of the fitness facility and changing rooms, the friendliness of personnel as well as the parking, location, maintenance and the safety and security of the location (**Main finding B33, in paragraph 5.3.4**).

However, there are a number of service elements with which members were not satisfied. These service elements include the availability of a tuck shop, personnel who look after children while members exercise; the availability of training equipment in peak hours, the availability of fitness programmes for children and the opportunity to exercise in another town at the same fitness facility (**Main finding B32, in paragraph 5.3.4**).

- **Main conclusion:** The majority of respondents were satisfied with the services provided by the fitness facility.
- **Recommendation:** It is important for fitness facilities to remember that they should maintain the level of satisfaction of members, but should also consider improving service offerings that members do not feel satisfied with.

**From the results of this study** it can be concluded fitness facilities need to focus on improving services, such as making provision for a tuck shop at the fitness facility and the provision of services where personnel looks after children while members exercise. Fitness facilities can also ensure that there is sufficient training equipment available in peak hours, and could explore the provision of fitness programmes specifically tailored for children. Fitness facilities that have various facilities across South Africa can also give members the opportunity to exercise in another town.

#### **6.2.4 Conclusion from objective 4**

The fourth objective for the study was to determine how customer satisfaction will influence customer behaviour.

A correlation analysis was performed in order to summarise the strength of the relationship between variables with a view to determine how customer satisfaction will influence customer behaviour as this will answer the fourth objective for the study.

A positive correlation was found between the satisfaction of respondents and the various customer behaviours.

Customer satisfaction will influence customer behaviour because satisfied customers will recommend the fitness facility to others and want to have a long-term relationship with the fitness facility. Furthermore, satisfied members will stay loyal to the fitness facility (**Main finding B42, in paragraph 5.3.11**).

- **Main conclusion:** Respondents who were satisfied with the services provided by the fitness facilities would recommend the fitness facility to others and wanted to have a long-term relationship with the fitness facility. Furthermore, satisfied members would stay loyal to the fitness facility.
- **Recommendation:** It is important for fitness facilities to improve their service offerings by providing services which are important to members, in order to ensure that members are satisfied with the services they receive. Fitness facilities can benefit significantly from satisfied members as these members will recommend the fitness facility to others and will also stay members of the fitness facility for a long time.

### 6.2.5 Conclusion from objective 5

The fifth objective for the study was to determine whether a difference exists between the importance of the service elements and the levels of satisfaction.

A practically significant difference exists between the importance and satisfaction with regard to Factor 2 (Equipment condition). Factor 2 includes service elements such as the working condition of the training equipment, the availability of training equipment in peak hours, the variety of training equipment, the helpfulness of personnel with fitness equipment and the safety and security of training equipment.

This indicates that although equipment condition is important to respondents, they were practically significant less satisfied with this factor (**Main finding B34, in paragraph 5.3.4.1**).

Medium effect sizes were obtained for Factor 1 (Personnel professionalism), Factor 3 (Membership preference), Factor 5 (Convenience issues), Factor 6 (Medical assistance), and Factor 7 (Cleanliness and the provision of drinkable water) indicating a difference of medium practical value. This means that respondents felt that these are important factors, but they are not completely satisfied with these factors (**Main finding B35, in paragraph 5.3.4.1**).

- **Main conclusion:** A difference exists between the importance and satisfaction with regard to the identified factors. Respondents of fitness facilities were not completely satisfied with factors which they viewed as important to them.
- **Recommendation:** It is important for fitness facilities to identify which factors are important to their members. Fitness facilities can then focus on these important service elements and by improving their service offering they will ensure that members are satisfied with the services they receive.

#### **6.2.6 Conclusion from objective 6**

The last objective for the study was to provide fitness facilities in the North West Province of South Africa with guidelines aimed at improving customer satisfaction.

After conducting the study and discussing the various objectives, conclusions and making recommendations, it is possible to present a number of guidelines to fitness facilities with a view to improving their customer satisfaction.

- Fitness facilities need to focus on those service elements which members view as important when planning and maintaining their service offerings.



- Furthermore, fitness facilities need to realise that all their members do not view the importance of service elements in the same way, and should therefore deliver services specifically tailored to various age groups, levels of education and gender.
- It is also important for fitness facilities to remember that they should maintain a good level of satisfaction among their members.
- Fitness facilities should also consider improving service offerings with which members do not feel satisfied.
- Fitness facilities also need to improve services, such as making provision for a tuck shop at the fitness facility and the provision of childcare services while members exercise.
- Fitness facilities should also make sure that enough training equipment is available during peak hours, and should look into the provision of fitness programmes specifically tailored for children.
- Furthermore, fitness facilities that have various facilities across South Africa can also give members the opportunity to exercise in another town.
- Lastly, fitness facilities can strive towards improving their service offerings by providing services which are important to members, in order to ensure that members are satisfied with the services they receive. Fitness facilities can greatly benefit from satisfied members, because satisfied members will recommend the fitness facility to others and will also stay a member of the fitness facility for a long time.

### 6.3 LINKING OBJECTIVES TO MAIN FINDINGS

The link between the secondary objectives for this study, the questions in the questionnaire and the main findings from Chapter 5 are presented in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1: Linking objectives, questionnaire and main findings**

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES	QUESTIONS	MAIN FINDINGS
1. Identify service elements which are important to customers of fitness facilities and can influence customer satisfaction with the fitness facility.	B1-B35	B2, B4, B6, B8, B10, B12, B14, B16, B18, B20 & B22
2. Identify if customers of fitness facilities view service elements differently.	A1-A13, B1-B35	B24 - B31
3. Determine the actual level of member satisfaction with the quality of fitness services	B1-B38	B36 - B33
4. Determine how customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction will influence customer behaviour.	B36, B39 - B41	B42
5. Determine if a difference exists between the importance of service elements and the level of satisfaction.	B1-B35	B34 & B35
6. Provide fitness facilities in the North West Province of South Africa with guidelines to improve customer satisfaction.	B1 – B41	B2 , B4 – B13, B31 – B42

It is clear from Table 6.1 that the secondary objectives of the study have been reached.

**The primary objective of the study, namely to investigate the satisfaction of members of fitness facilities with services delivered, has therefore been achieved through the objectives that have been met.**

### 6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations were identified for this study:

- Because a convenience sampling method was used, the results of the study were not representative of the entire population of the North West Province and were

therefore only representative of the respondents who participated in this study. This particular sampling method was used because fitness facilities in the North West Province were not prepared to allow the researcher access to their membership database.

- Another limitation was based on time and cost restraints which implied the use of a relatively small sample.
- The length of the questionnaire also presented limitations for the study as a lack of interest was observed on the part of some respondents who participated in the study. This resulted in a number of incomplete questionnaires.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

After completing the study and considering the various limitations, the following recommendations can be made for future research:

- Because the length of the questionnaire in this study limited the number of respondents who participated in the study, it is recommended that a shorter questionnaire should be used in future research.
- It can also be recommended that a probability sampling method should be followed in future research to collect representative results of the entire population.
- A similar study can be conducted for individual fitness facilities, as fitness facilities are unique and have different capabilities to deliver services. By conducting a study for each individual fitness facility it will be possible to make a relevant comparison between the services that the fitness facility offers and what the members of the fitness facility really want or view as important. Specific strategies can then be recommended to the individual fitness facility with a view to improve their service offering and increase their member satisfaction.

- Furthermore, future research can determine if the importance factors identified in the exploratory factor analysis are also applicable in other provinces in South Africa.
- Future research can also determine if the other provinces in South Africa view the important service elements differently. Results obtained from the study can be compared to the study on the North West Province to establish if members from different provinces view the importance of the service elements similarly or differently.

## **6.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a summary and conclusions of the study by presenting the specific major findings as well as recommendations with regard to the results that was obtained. A link between secondary objectives, questions in the questionnaire and main findings set for the study was also presented. An outline of the limitations of the study was also presented, together with future research recommendations.

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# **APPENDIX A: Questionnaire**



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May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Dear Manager

### **SURVEY: FITNESS FACILITY (Gymnasiums)**

Ms. Carinda Beytell is currently busy with her Master's degree at the above institution. As indicated on the questionnaires, parts of this study involve fitness facilities.

Please be so kind as to assist her in this matter.

We appreciate your co-operation and please, do not hesitate to contact me if you do have any further queries.

Regards

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'Prof LR J Van Rensburg'.

PROF LR J VAN RENSBURG  
DIRECTOR

Oorspronklike gegewens: PROF LR J VAN RENSBURG(10062858) C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\My Documents\A.Personeel ONB\Carinda\OPNAMES  
FIKSHEIDSENTRUMS.docx  
17 Mei 2010 Moenie hier tik nie



Vraelysnommer: / *Questionnaire number:*

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NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY<sup>®</sup>  
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NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT  
POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS

**VRAELYS: / QUESTIONNAIRE:**

**KLIËNTEVERWAGTINGE EN -TEVREDENHEID MET FIKSHEIDSFASILITEITE IN DIE NOORDWES-  
PROVINSIE**

***CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTION WITH FITNESS FACILITIES IN THE NORTH  
WEST PROVINCE.***

**Siftingsvraag: / *Screening question:***

Is u 'n lid van een van die volgende fiksheidsfasiliteite: *Curves, Fitness Zone, Virgin Active?* / *Are you a member of one of the following fitness facilities: Curves, Fitness Zone, Virgin Active?*

Ja / Yes

Nee / No


**Merk asb. al die vrae met 'n X / Please mark all your answers with an X**

**AFDELING A / SECTION A**

**Vraag 1: Die doel van die volgende algemene vrae is om relevante inligting oor uself te bekom. / Question 1: The following general questions are aimed at obtaining relevant information about you:**

1.1. Geslag: / Gender:

Manlik / Male

1
---

Vroulik / Female

2
---

1.2. Huwelikstatus: / Marital status:

Enkellopend / Single

1
---

Getroud / Married

2
---

Geskei / Separated

3
---

Woon saam / Living together

4
---

1.3. Ouderdomsgroep: / Age group:

18- 25

1
---

26-35

2
---

36-45

3
---

46-55

4
---

56-65

5
---

65+

6
---

1.4. Hoogste vlak van opleiding: / Highest level of education:

Primêre skool / Primary school

1
---

Hoërskool / High school

2
---

Diploma / Diploma

3
---

Universiteitsgraad / University degree

4
---

Nagraads / Post-graduate degree

5
---

1.5. Indiensname: (Merk slegs een) / *Employment: (Mark only one)*

Voltydse betrekking / <i>Full-time employed</i>	1
Deeltydse betrekking / <i>Part-time employed</i>	2
Selfwerkzaam / <i>Self-employed</i>	3
Pensioenaris / <i>Pensioner</i>	4
Student / <i>Student</i>	5
Tuisteskepper / <i>Homemaker</i>	6
Werkloos / <i>Unemployed</i>	7
Ander, spesifiseer asseblief onderaan / <i>Other, please specify below</i>	8

1.6. Van watter een van die volgende fiksheidsfasiliteite is u 'n lid? / *Of which one of the following fitness facilities are you a member?*

Curves	1
Fitness Zone	2
Virgin Active	3

1.7. Hoe lank is u al 'n lid van die fiksheidsfasiliteit? / *How long have you been a member of this fitness facility?*

Minder as 'n jaar / <i>Less than a year</i>	1
Tussen 1 – 2 jaar / <i>Between 1 – 2 years</i>	2
Tussen 2 – 3 jaar / <i>Between 2 – 3 years</i>	3
Tussen 3 – 4 jaar / <i>Between 3 – 4 years</i>	4
Tussen 4 – 5 jaar / <i>Between 4 – 5 years</i>	5
5 jaar of meer / <i>5 years or more</i>	6

1.8. Hoe gereeld oefen u? / *How often do you exercise?*

Minder as een keer per week / <i>Less than once a week</i>	1
Een keer per week / <i>Once a week</i>	2
2 – 3 keer per week / <i>2 – 3 times a week</i>	3
Daaglik / <i>Daily</i>	4

1.9. Watter tyd van die dag oefen u gewoonlik? (Merk slegs een) / *What time of day do you usually exercise (Mark only one)*

Soggens / <i>Mornings (05:00 – 12:00)</i>	1
Etenstye / <i>Lunch times (12:00 – 14:00)</i>	2
Middae / <i>Afternoons (14:00 – 18:00)</i>	3
Aande / <i>Evenings (van / from 18:00)</i>	4

1.10. Hoe oefen u gewoonlik? (Merk slegs een) / *How do you usually exercise? (Mark only one)*

Alleen / *Alone*

Saam met vriende / *With friends*

Saam met familie / *With family*

Saam met kollegas / *With colleagues*

Ander, spesifiseer asseblief onder / *Other, please specify below*

1
2
3
4
5

1.11. Waarom oefen u? (U mag meer as een antwoord kies) / *Why do you exercise? (You can chose more than one answer)*

1.11.1 Om gesond te bly / *To stay healthy*

1.11.2 Om fiks te bly / *To stay fit*

1.11.3 Om ferm en soepel te bly / *To stay firm and flexible.*

1.11.4 Om gewig te verloor / *To lose weight*

1.11.5 Om spiere te bou / *To build muscle*

1.11.6 Om te sosialiseer / *To socialise*

1.11.7 Om spanning te verlig / *To relief stress*

1.11.8 Ander, spesifiseer asseblief onderaan / *Other, please specify below*

Ja / Yes	Nee / No
1	2
1	2
1	2
1	2
1	2
1	2
1	2
1	2

1.12 Hoe sou u die vlak van u fiksheid beoordeel? / *How would you rate your level of fitness?*

Swak / <i>Poor</i>	Gemiddeld / <i>Fair</i>	Goed / <i>Good</i>	Uitstekend / <i>Excellent</i>
1	2	3	4

1.13 Hoe sou u die vlak van u gesondheid beoordeel? / *How would you rate your level of health?*

Sleg / <i>Poor</i>	Gemiddeld / <i>Fair</i>	Goed / <i>Good</i>	Uitstekend / <i>Excellent</i>
1	2	3	4

**AFDELING B / SECTION B**

**Vraag 2: Hierdie vrae wil vasstel hoe belangrik verskillende elemente vir u is, asook u vlak van tevredenheid met die fiksheidsfasiliteit. / Question 2: These questions aim to determine how important various elements are to you as well as your level of satisfaction with this fitness facility.**

Beoordeel die volgende elemente in terme van die **BELANGRIKHEID** van die element vir u (aan die linkerkant), en beoordeel die fiksheidsfasiliteit wat u gebruik met betrekking tot die **TEVREDENHEID** wat

u ervaar ten opsigte van die dienslewering (aan die regterkant) deur die volgende skaal te gebruik: /  
Rate the following elements in terms of the **IMPORTANT** of the elements to you (on the left), and rate  
the fitness facility which you use with regards to how **SATISFIED** you are with the service performance  
(on the right) using the following scale:

LINGS: Beoordeel die **BELANGRIKHEID** vir u, as: /  
LEFT: Rate the **IMPORTANT** to you, where:

REGS: Beoordeel die **TEVREDENHEID**, as: /  
RIGHT: Rate the **SATISFACTION**, where:

1	2	3	4	5
Glad nie belangrik nie / Not important at all	Nie belangrik nie / Not important	Neutraal / Neutral	Belangrik / Important	Baie belangrik / Very important

1	2	3	4	5
Glad nie tevrede nie / Not satisfied at all	Nie tevrede nie / Not satisfied	Neutraal / Neutral	Tevrede / Satisfied	Baie tevrede / Very satisfied

	<b>BELANGRIKHEID / IMPORTANT</b>					<b>ELEMENT / ELEMENT</b>	<b>TEVREDENHEID / SATISFACTION</b>				
2.1	1	2	3	4	5	Gemaklike atmosfeer in die fiksheidsfasiliteit / <i>Comfortable atmosphere within the fitness facility</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.2	1	2	3	4	5	Omvattende pamflette en inligting rakende die fiksheidsfasiliteit / <i>Comprehensive brochures and information regarding the fitness facility</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.3	1	2	3	4	5	Beskikbaarheid van omvattende fiksheidsprogramme en -skedules op die internet / <i>Availability of comprehensive fitness programmes and schedules on the internet</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.4	1	2	3	4	5	Voldoende ruimte in die fiksheidsfasiliteit / <i>Sufficient space within the fitness facility</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.5	1	2	3	4	5	Waarde vir geld in terme van die lidmaatskapfooi / <i>Value for money regarding the membership fee</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.6	1	2	3	4	5	Voorsiening van lidmaatskappakkette, bv. studentpakkette, korporatiewe pakkette / <i>Provision of membership packages e.g. student membership packages, corporate membership packages</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.7	1	2	3	4	5	Gedetailleerde inligting oor lidmaatskapvoordele bv. lidmaatskapafslag / <i>Detailed information of membership benefits e.g. membership discounts</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.8	1	2	3	4	5	Gerieflike besigheidsure / <i>Convenient trading hours</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.9	1	2	3	4	5	Gerieflike parkering / <i>Convenient parking</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.10	1	2	3	4	5	Gerieflike ligging van die fiksheidsfasiliteit / <i>Convenient location of the fitness facility</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.11	1	2	3	4	5	Sindelikheid van die fiksheidsfasiliteit / <i>Cleanliness of the fitness facility</i>	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>BELANGRIKHEID / IMPORTANCE</b>					<b>ELEMENT / ELEMENT</b>	<b>TEVREDENHEID / SATISFACTION</b>				
2.12	1	2	3	4	5	Onderhoud van die fiksheidsfasiliteit bv. die voorkoming van elektriese en loodgieterprobleme / <i>Maintenance of the fitness facility. e.g. the prevention of electrical and plumbing problems.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.13	1	2	3	4	5	Sindelikheid van die kleedkamers / <i>Cleanliness of changing rooms</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.14	1	2	3	4	5	Sindelikheid van die oefenapparaat / <i>Cleanliness of training equipment</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.15	1	2	3	4	5	Beskikbaarheid van oefenapparaat tydens spitsye / <i>Availability of training equipment in peak hours</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.16	1	2	3	4	5	Werkende toestand van oefenapparaat / <i>Working condition of training equipment</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.17	1	2	3	4	5	Verskeidenheid van oefenapparaat / <i>Variety of training equipment</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.18	1	2	3	4	5	Verskeidenheid van fiksheidprogramme bv. aërobiese oefeninge, "spinning", joga, zumba / <i>Variety of fitness programmes e.g. aerobics, spinning, yoga, zumba</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.19	1	2	3	4	5	Fiksheidsprogramme vir kinders / <i>Fitness programmes for children</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.20	1	2	3	4	5	Personeel wat na kinders kyk terwyl u oefen / <i>Personnel looking after your children whilst you exercise</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.21	1	2	3	4	5	Hulpvaardigheid van personeel met die fiksheidstoerusting / <i>Helpfulness of personnel with fitness equipment</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.22	1	2	3	4	5	Hulpvaardigheid van die personeel met u behoeftes en versoeke / <i>Helpfulness of personnel in terms of your needs and requests</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.23	1	2	3	4	5	Vriendelikheid van personeel / <i>Friendliness personnel</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.24	1	2	3	4	5	Professionele vaardighede van personeel / <i>Professional skills of personnel</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.25	1	2	3	4	5	Professionele vaardighede van instruktors / <i>Professional skills of trainers</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.26	1	2	3	4	5	Beskikbaarheid van instruktors / <i>Availability of trainers</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.27	1	2	3	4	5	Betrokkenheid van personeel in die vooruitgang van u fiksheid / <i>Involvement of personnel in your fitness progress</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.28	1	2	3	4	5	Veiligheid en sekuriteit in terme van die ligging van die fiksheidsfasiliteit / <i>Safety and security of the location of the fitness facility</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.29	1	2	3	4	5	Veiligheid en sekuriteit van fiksheidstoerusting / <i>Safety and security of the fitness equipment</i>	1	2	3	4	5
2.30	1	2	3	4	5	Beskikbaarheid van mediese hulp / <i>Availability of medical assistance</i>	1	2	3	4	5

	BELANGRIKHEID / IMPORTANCE					ELEMENT / ELEMENT	TEVREDENHEID / SATISFACTION				
2.31	1	2	3	4	5	Voorsiening van gratis drinkwater / Provision of free drinkable water	1	2	3	4	5
2.32	1	2	3	4	5	Beskikbaarheid van 'n snoepie / Availability of a tuck shop	1	2	3	4	5
2.33	1	2	3	4	5	Geleentheid om gaste saam te bring om saam met u te oefen / Opportunity to bring guests to exercise with you	1	2	3	4	5
2.34	1	2	3	4	5	Geleentheid om in ander dorpe te oefen by 'n soortgelyke fiksheidsfasiliteit / Opportunity to exercise in another town at the similar fitness facility	1	2	3	4	5
2.35	1	2	3	4	5	Beskikbaarheid van 'n sluitkas vir u besittings terwyl u oefen / Availability of a locker for your belongings while you exercise	1	2	3	4	5

- 2.36 Op 'n skaal van 1 tot 4 (waar 1 heeltemal ontevrede is en 4 baie tevrede is), dui aan hoe tevrede u is met die algehele diens wat deur die fiksheidsfasiliteit voorsien word. / On a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 is very satisfied and 4 is totally dissatisfied), indicate how satisfied you are with the overall service provided by the fitness facility.

Heeltemal ontevrede / Totally dissatisfied

Ontevrede / Dissatisfied

Tevrede / Satisfied

Baie tevrede / Very satisfied

1
2
3
4

Beoordeel die volgende op 'n 1 tot 5 skaal (waar 1 nee, nooit is en 5 ja, definitief is). / Rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is no, never and 5 is yes, definitely).

	Nee, nooit / No, Never	Waarskynlik nie / Probably not	Neutraal / Neutral	Ja / Yes	Ja, definitief / Yes, definitely
2.37	1	2	3	4	5
2.38	1	2	3	4	5
2.39	1	2	3	4	5
2.40	1	2	3	4	5
2.41	1	2	3	4	5

Dankie vir u tyd. Mag u 'n wonderlike dag hê! / Thank you for your time. Have a lovely day!

# **APPENDIX B: Assistance in statistical analysis**





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**Statistical Consultation Service**

Tel: (018) 299 2018

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16 November 2010

**To whom it may concern**

**Re: Dissertation C Beytell, student number: 12745502**

We hereby confirm that the Statistical Consultation Service of the North-West University has analysed the data and assisted with the interpretation of the results.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J W Breytenbach'.

**Mrs J W Breytenbach (MSc)**