

Evaluation of the Perceptions of Fitness Sports Center Members Towards Service Quality

Fitness Spor Merkezleri Üyelerinin Hizmet Kalitesine Yönelik Algularının Değerlendirilmesi

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Abstract: This research aimed to evaluate the perceptions of members of fitness sports centers regarding service quality. A relational screening model was used in the research. Three hundred and ninety-five adults who are members of sports centers affiliated with the Sports Affairs Directorate of Bornova Municipality in Izmir province and who exercise regularly participated in the study voluntarily. "Personal Information Form" and Perceived Service Quality in Sports and Fitness Centers scale developed by Uçan (2007) were used as data collection tools. In addition to descriptive statistics, independent groups t-test and One-way ANOVA methods were used in the analysis of the data. When the research findings were examined, it was observed that there were statistically significant differences in perceived service quality scores according to factors such as gender, educational status, occupational status, purpose of going to the sports center, exercise duration, and preferred sports center ($p < .05$). On the other hand, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between perceived service quality scores according to the age variable ($p > .05$). As a result, it was determined that service quality factors vary depending on different demographic and personal characteristics.

Keywords: Fitness, sports center, service quality, perception.

Özet: Bu araştırmanın amacı, fitness spor merkezleri üyelerinin hizmet kalitesine yönelik algularını değerlendirmektir. Araştırmada ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Araştırmaya, İzmir ili Bornova Belediyesi Spor İşleri Müdürlüğü'ne bağlı spor merkezlerine üye olan ve düzenli olarak egzersiz yapan Üç yüz doksan beş yetişkin gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. Örneklem ise, bu merkezlerde üye olan ve çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılan 395 bireyden oluşmaktadır. Veri toplama araçları olarak, "Kişisel Bilgi Formu" ve Uçan (2007) tarafından geliştirilen Spor ve Fitness Merkezlerinde Algılanan Hizmet Kalitesi ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde tanımlayıcı istatistiklerin yanı sıra bağımsız gruplar t-testi ve tek yönlü varyans analizi yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırma bulguları incelendiğinde, algılanan hizmet kalitesi puanlarında cinsiyet, eğitim durumu, meslek durumu, spor merkezine gitme amacı, egzersiz süresi ve tercih edilen spor merkezi gibi faktörlere göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılıklar olduğu gözlemlenmiştir ($p < .05$). Öte yandan, yaş değişkenine göre algılanan hizmet kalitesi puanları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık olmadığı tespit edilmiştir ($p > .05$). Sonuç olarak, hizmet kalitesi faktörlerinin farklı demografik ve kişisel özelliklere bağlı olarak değişiklikler gösterdiği belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Fitness, spor merkezi, hizmet kalitesi, algı.

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INTRODUCTION

Sports can be defined as an activity that contributes to the development of physical and mental abilities, both individually and in groups. Playing an important role in social life, sports have also become an effective structure in shaping social thoughts by supporting cultural development (Akkoç and Yücesir, 2016). Today, sports have become an important area of activity that allows individuals to live a healthy life. People are directed to sports in line with the goal of a better and healthier life. This tendency is becoming increasingly widespread in developed societies, and individuals are interested in various sports activities by discovering the positive effects of sports on health. Activities such as lifelong sports, recreational sports, fitness, aerobics, and jogging are among the important factors that increase people's desire to do sports. In addition, research has shown that sports support individuals' mental, spiritual, and social health beyond protecting their physical health (İmamoğlu, 2014).

Sports centers provide important services to the needs of individuals of different ages to protect and improve their health. Sports centers can be defined as places that operate in various sports branches by private sector, public, and non-governmental organizations. The elements brought together to meet and satisfy the sports-related needs of individuals are transformed into the services offered by sports centers (Yeler, 2021). Sports centers contribute greatly to the mental

and social health of individuals as well as their physical health. Moreover, various activities such as fitness, aerobics, and yoga allow individuals to increase their quality of life and make efficient use of their free time. Sports centers play an important role in social structure by supporting the physical, mental, spiritual, and social development of people (Tel et al., 2019). Fitness can be defined as a branch of sports that aims to increase physical performance and develop skills such as strength and endurance (Çakır and Ergin, 2023). The spread of a sedentary lifestyle has brought about a period in which individuals reduce their physical activity, sit more, watch television, and spend more time with mobile devices. This leads to an increase in health problems and a weakening of immune system functions (Demir et al., 2022). In recent years, fitness and bodybuilding sports, shaped around the slogan "The Foundation of Healthy Living", especially in America and Europe, have reached large masses and spread the habit of doing sports (Akkoç and Yücesir, 2016). These sports have become a lifestyle that individuals of all ages can easily practice at home or in gyms (Berk and Bingöl, 2023). Sports centers not only support the physical and mental health of individuals but also offer social and community benefits (Erdüğan and Kurt, 2013). Sports centers are facilities designed to meet the sporting needs of individuals and provide satisfaction. In some countries, sports are

considered a public service, and in this context, the main goal of state-run sports centers is to provide social benefit by increasing the public's opportunities to do sports (Özbey and Göküş, 2022). In addition, improving the quality of the services provided by sports centers can make an important contribution to playing sports more widespread in society and raising health awareness (Sunay, 2023). Grönroos' Perceived Service Quality Model examines service quality in three main dimensions: technical quality, functional quality, and image. While technical quality highlights the subjective and objective aspects of the service, functional quality refers to the intangible features of the service and the elements that affect customer perception. The image is shaped by the combination of these two quality elements and determines the perceived value of the company providing the service (Güzel and Taşçı, 2022). While the importance of healthy living and exercise is increasing day by day, it is of great importance for sports centers to increase the quality of service they offer in terms of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Çalışkan and Erdoğan, 2022). In light of the above-mentioned information, the main purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of the members of the fitness sports centers regarding service quality. The research aims to evaluate the quality of the services provided by the sports centers and to reveal the effects of these services on user satisfaction.

METHODS

Research Model: In this study, the relational screening model was preferred to analyze the relationships between variables. The relational screening model is a widely used research method to determine whether there is a relationship between two or more variables and, if so, to measure the direction and degree of this relationship (Karasar, 2005; Demir & İra, 2025). In this context, it was evaluated that this model is a suitable method to examine the relationship between various dimensions of service quality and gender, age, and other demographic factors.

Purpose of the research: This research aimed to evaluate the perceptions of members of fitness sports centers toward service quality.

Research Group: The universe of the study consists of individuals who are members of sports centers affiliated with the Izmir province Bornova Municipality Sports Affairs Directorate and who exercise regularly. The sample consists of 395 individuals who are members of these centers and who volunteered to contribute to the study. Participants were determined by random sampling method and were selected from the Çamdibi and Atatürk neighborhoods of Bornova. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their informed consent was obtained based on voluntaries.

The basic assumptions of this research were as follows:

1. It was accepted that the scale used in the research was suitable for the purposes of the research.
2. It was assumed that the statements of the sports center members constituting the study group on the scale reflected the real situation and that the answers were given sincerely.

Data Collection: Data were collected using the "drop and collect" method via a questionnaire form. This method allowed participants to fill out the questionnaire at their own time. The questionnaires were distributed to individuals who regularly come to the sports centers and exercise, and the response time was approximately 10 minutes. All participants participated in the study voluntarily.

A two-part questionnaire form was used for data collection in the study. The first part covers the demographic information of the participants; this information includes gender, age, educational status, income level, purpose of coming to the center, time spent at the center, duration of membership, and reasons for choosing the center. The second part used the "Sports-Fitness Centers Perceived Service Quality Scale (SFM_HKÖ)" to evaluate the participants' perceptions of the service quality in sports and fitness centers. This scale, developed by Uçan (2007), consists of six dimensions and thirty-one items: Interaction quality (10 items), output quality (5 items), physical environment quality (7 items), exercise tools and equipment (3 items), program quality (3 items), and environmental conditions quality (3 items). The scale is evaluated with a 5-point Likert-type system; participants score between "5: Strongly Agree" and "1: Strongly Disagree". The lowest score that can be obtained from this scale is 31, and the highest score is 155.

Analysis of Data: The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows 22.0 program for statistical analysis. Without analyzing the data obtained first skewness (skewness) and kurtosis (kurtosis) The values were calculated and it was determined that the values varied between -2 and +2 and that this range was suitable for normal distribution (Hair et. al, 2013). Within the scope of the analysis, the demographic characteristics of the participants were evaluated with frequency and percentage analyses. In comparing the service quality scores with gender, age, education level, and other variables: Independent groups t-test was used. In addition, One-way ANOVA was applied to test the differences between the groups. When significant differences were detected as a result of ANOVA, the Tukey post hoc test was performed to determine which groups the difference was. In all statistical analyses, $p < 0.05$ was accepted as the significance level.

RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of participants

Gender	n	%
Female	105	26,60
Male	290	73,40
Age	n	%
16-25 Years	211	53,40
26-35 Years	92	23,30
36-45 Years	66	16,70
46 and above	26	6,60
Educational Status	n	%
Primary Education	14	3,50
Secondary Education	96	24,30
Undergraduate	251	63,50
Postgraduate	34	8,60
Occupational Group	n	%
Student	164	41,50
Freelance	166	42,00
Coach	16	4,10
Public	43	10,90
Retired	6	1,50
Primary Purpose of Going to the Sports Center	n	%
For Aesthetics	110	27,80
For a Healthy Life	181	45,80
For Socialization	10	2,50
To Evaluate Free Time	30	7,60
For Performance	62	15,70
Other	2	,50
Exercise Duration	n	%
Less than 1 hour	26	6,60
1-2 hours	340	86,10
3-4 hours	23	5,80
4 hours and above	6	1,50
Preferring the Sports Center	n	%
Affordable Price	162	41,0
Service Quality	52	13,2
Experienced Staff	38	9,60
Variety of Exercise Programs and Activities	129	32,70
Exercise Equipment	14	3,5
Total	395	100,0

Table 2. Results related to the measurement tool

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis	$\bar{X} \pm SD$
Physical environmental quality	-,497	-,142	4,08±,68
Ambient conditions	-,913	,084	4,28±,76
Exercise equipment	-,916	,084	3,94±1,06
Program quality	-,956	,075	4,04±1,02
Interaction quality	-1,503	1,89	4,57±,58
Output quality	-1,951	4,426	4,66±,54

When Table 2 was examined, it was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values of the measurement tool varied

between -2 and +2 and this range was suitable for normal distribution.

Table 3. Comparison results of participants' service quality scores by gender

Variables	Gender	n	\bar{X}	SD	t	p
Physical environmental quality	Female	105	4,17	0,73	1,652	,099
	Male	290	4,04	0,65		
Ambient conditions	Female	105	4,49	0,67	3,442	,001
	Male	290	4,21	0,79		
Exercise equipment	Female	105	4,35	0,91	5,039	,000
	Male	290	3,80	1,08		
Program quality	Female	105	4,20	1,03	1,824	,070
	Male	290	3,99	1,02		
Interaction quality	Female	105	4,74	0,41	4,105	,000
	Male	290	4,52	0,62		
Output quality	Female	105	4,76	0,45	2,504	,013
	Male	290	4,63	0,57		

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

The "independent groups t-test" results in Table 3 show that there are significant differences based on gender among the participants' service quality evaluation factors,

environmental conditions, exercise equipment, interaction quality and output quality scores ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4. Comparison results of participants' service quality scores according to age variable

Variables	Age	n	\bar{X}	SD	F	p
Physical environmental quality	16-25 Years	211	4,09	0,65	1,566	,197
	26-35 Years	92	4,10	0,68		
	36-45 Years	66	3,94	0,79		
	46 and above	26	4,25	0,54		
Ambient conditions	16-25 Years	211	4,28	0,74	,410	,746
	26-35 Years	92	4,27	0,82		
	36-45 Years	66	4,24	0,87		
	46 and above	26	4,44	0,51		
Exercise equipment	16-25 Years	211	3,95	1,00	1,053	,369
	26-35 Years	92	3,93	1,18		
	36-45 Years	66	3,85	1,20		
	46 and above	26	4,28	0,73		
Program quality	16-25 Years	211	4,01	1,00	,575	,632
	26-35 Years	92	4,07	1,15		
	36-45 Years	66	4,02	1,05		
	46 and above	26	4,28	0,62		
Interaction quality	16-25 Years	211	4,51	0,62	2,241	,083
	26-35 Years	92	4,67	0,52		
	36-45 Years	66	4,62	0,57		
	46 and above	26	4,69	0,40		
Output quality	16-25 Years	211	4,66	0,56	,111	,953
	26-35 Years	92	4,65	0,56		
	36-45 Years	66	4,68	0,51		
	46 and above	26	4,71	0,44		

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

According to the results of One-way ANOVA in Table 4, no significant age-related differences were found in the service quality evaluation factors of the participants ($p > .05$).

Table 5. Comparison results of participants' service quality scores according to educational status

Variables	Educational Status	n	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Fark
Physical environmental quality	Primary education ^a	14	4,65	0,47	3,792	,011	a>b,c,d
	Secondary Education ^b	96	4,10	0,73			
	Licence ^c	251	4,04	0,66			
	Postgraduate ^d	34	4,06	0,61			
Ambient conditions	Primary education ^a	14	4,57	0,55	1,361	,254	
	Secondary Education ^b	96	4,24	0,86			
	Licence ^c	251	4,31	0,75			
	Postgraduate ^d	34	4,12	0,71			
Exercise equipment	Primary education ^a	14	4,38	0,84	,98	,402	
	Secondary Education ^b	96	3,88	1,22			
	Licence ^c	251	3,94	1,04			
	Postgraduate ^d	34	4,04	0,89			
Program quality	Primary education ^a	14	4,71	0,50	2,515	,058	
	Secondary Education ^b	96	4,11	1,00			
	Licence ^c	251	3,98	1,03			
	Postgraduate ^d	34	4,06	1,14			
Interaction quality	Primary education ^a	14	4,79	0,36	,627	,598	
	Secondary Education ^b	96	4,57	0,68			
	Licence ^c	251	4,57	0,56			
	Postgraduate ^d	34	4,56	0,48			
Output quality	Primary education ^a	14	4,89	0,29	1,452	,227	
	Secondary Education ^b	96	4,64	0,54			
	Licence ^c	251	4,64	0,58			
	Postgraduate ^d	34	4,78	0,30			

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

In Table 5, the “One-way ANOVA” found that there were significant differences in the participants’ service quality evaluation factors, and physical environment quality scores, according to their educational status (p<.05). According to the post-hoc Tukey results conducted to determine the

source of the difference, it was determined that the mean scores of those with primary school education were significantly higher than the mean scores of those with secondary school, undergraduate and postgraduate education.

Table 6. Comparison results of participants' service quality scores according to their occupational status

Variables	Occupational Status	n	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Difference
Physical environmental quality	Student ^a	164	3,99	,69	3,428	,009	b,c>a
	Freelance ^b	166	4,18	,68			
	Coach ^c	16	4,36	,38			
	Public ^d	43	3,89	,64			
	Retired ^e	6	4,33	,32			
Ambient conditions	Student ^a	164	4,18	,79	3,181	,014	b>a
	Freelance ^b	166	4,44	,77			
	Coach ^c	16	4,17	,86			
	Public ^d	43	4,13	,56			
	Retired ^e	6	4,11	,46			
Exercise equipment	Student ^a	164	3,83	,98	1,06	,376	
	Freelance ^b	166	4,02	1,16			
	Coach ^c	16	4,00	1,20			
	Public ^d	43	4,12	,95			
	Retired ^e	6	3,78	,96			
Program quality	Student ^a	164	3,87	1,06	3,448	,009	b>a
	Freelance ^b	166	4,23	,94			
	Coach ^c	16	4,29	1,11			
	Public ^d	43	3,86	1,13			
	Retired ^e	6	4,44	,46			
Interaction quality	Student ^a	164	4,49	,63	1,762	,136	
	Freelance ^b	166	4,66	,56			
	Coach ^c	16	4,65	,43			
	Public ^d	43	4,55	,51			
	Retired ^e	6	4,63	,29			
Output quality	Student ^a	164	4,66	,57	,422	,792	
	Freelance ^b	166	4,68	,56			
	Coach ^c	16	4,68	,45			
	Public ^d	43	4,64	,43			
	Retired ^e	6	4,40	,47			

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

In the “One-way ANOVA” in Table 6, it was determined that there were significant differences in the service quality evaluation factors of the participants, physical environment quality, environmental conditions, and program quality, according to the occupational groups ($p < .05$). According to the post-hoc Tukey results conducted to determine the

source of the difference; it was determined that the mean scores of the freelancers and trainers in the physical environment quality were significantly higher than the students, and the mean scores of the freelancers’ group in environmental conditions and program quality were significantly higher than the mean scores of the students.

Table 7. Comparison results of participants' service quality scores according to their primary purpose of going to the sports center

Variables	Purpose Status	n	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Difference
Physical environmental quality	For aesthetics ^a	110	4,26	0,66	5,55	,00	a,d>b
	For a healthy life ^b	181	3,94	0,68			
	For socializing ^c	10	4,31	0,57			
	Making the most of your free time ^d	30	4,38	0,48			
	For performance ^e	62	4,00	0,66			
	Other ^f	2	3,29	0,00			
Ambient conditions	For aesthetics ^a	110	4,35	0,80	1,16	,33	
	For a healthy life ^b	181	4,23	0,78			
	For socializing ^c	10	4,47	0,53			
	Making the most of your free time ^d	30	4,49	0,62			
	For performance ^e	62	4,19	0,76			
	Other ^f	2	4,67	0,00			
Exercise equipment	For aesthetics ^a	110	4,00	0,88	4,71	,00	a,b,d>e
	For a healthy life ^b	181	3,99	1,08			
	For socializing ^c	10	4,33	0,86			
	Making the most of your free time ^d	30	4,42	0,55			
	For performance ^e	62	3,43	1,36			
	Other ^f	2	4,00	0,00			
Program quality	For aesthetics ^a	110	4,08	1,02	1,79	,12	
	For a healthy life ^b	181	4,03	1,05			
	For socializing ^c	10	4,53	0,61			
	Making the most of your free time ^d	30	4,33	0,80			
	For performance ^e	62	3,82	1,08			
	Other ^f	2	3,33	0,00			
Interaction quality	For aesthetics ^a	110	4,51	0,68	6,88	,00	a,b,c,d,e>f
	For a healthy life ^b	181	4,61	0,51			
	For socializing ^c	10	4,72	0,39			
	Making the most of your free time ^d	30	4,82	0,23			
	For performance ^e	62	4,50	0,60			
	Other ^f	2	2,60	0,00			
Output quality	For aesthetics ^a	110	4,64	0,54	1,86	,10	
	For a healthy life ^b	181	4,67	0,54			
	For socializing ^c	10	4,80	0,42			
	Making the most of your free time ^d	30	4,83	0,29			
	For performance ^e	62	4,61	0,66			
	Other ^f	2	3,80	0,00			

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

In Table 7, the “One-way ANOVA” found that there were significant differences in the service quality evaluation factors of the participants, physical environment quality, exercise equipment and interaction quality, according to the primary purpose of going to the sports center ($p<.05$). According to the post-hoc Tukey results conducted to determine the source of the difference; in physical environment quality, the average scores of those who go to the sports center for aesthetics and leisure time evaluation

were significantly higher than those who go to the sports center for a healthy life; in exercise equipment, the average scores of those who go to the sports center for aesthetics, a healthy life and leisure time evaluation were significantly higher than those who come for performance; in interaction quality, the average scores of those who go to the sports center for aesthetics, a healthy life, socialization, leisure time evaluation and performance were significantly higher than those who go to the sports center for other purposes.

Table 8. Comparison results of participants' service quality scores according to exercise duration

Variables	Exercise Duration	n	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Difference
Physical environmental quality	Less than 1 hour ^a	26	4,40	0,37	3,115	,026	a>b,d
	1-2 hours ^b	340	4,05	0,67			
	3-4 hours ^c	23	4,18	0,76			
	4 hours and above ^d	6	3,67	0,99			
Ambient conditions	Less than 1 hour ^a	26	4,51	0,62	2,09	,101	
	1-2 hours ^b	340	4,29	0,75			
	3-4 hours ^c	23	4,10	0,95			
	4 hours and above ^d	6	3,78	1,20			
Exercise equipment	Less than 1 hour ^a	26	4,19	1,07	,623	,601	
	1-2 hours ^b	340	3,93	1,06			
	3-4 hours ^c	23	3,99	1,23			
	4 hours and above ^d	6	3,67	0,52			
Program quality	Less than 1 hour ^a	26	4,65	0,56	4,333	,005	a>b
	1-2 hours ^b	340	4,00	1,03			
	3-4 hours ^c	23	4,22	1,15			
	4 hours and above ^d	6	3,44	1,13			
Interaction quality	Less than 1 hour ^a	26	4,79	0,35	5,766	,001	a,b,c>d
	1-2 hours ^b	340	4,57	0,58			
	3-4 hours ^c	23	4,65	0,52			
	4 hours and above ^d	6	3,73	1,00			
Output quality	Less than 1 hour ^a	26	4,85	0,28	1,613	,186	
	1-2 hours ^b	340	4,65	0,57			
	3-4 hours ^c	23	4,69	0,39			
	4 hours and above ^d	6	4,40	0,47			

* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

In Table 8, the “One-way ANOVA” found that there were significant differences in the service quality evaluation factors of the participants, physical environment quality, program quality, and interaction quality, according to the duration of the exercise ($p<.05$). According to the post-hoc Tukey results conducted to determine the source of the difference; in terms of physical environment quality, the mean scores of those who exercised less than 1 hour per day were significantly higher than the mean scores of those who

exercised 1-2 hours and 4 hours and above; in terms of program quality, the mean scores of those who exercised less than 1 hour per day were significantly higher than the mean scores of those who exercised 1-2 hours per day; and in terms of interaction quality, the mean scores of those who exercised less than 1 hour, 1-2 hours and 4 hours and above were significantly higher than the mean scores of those who exercised 4 hours and above.

Table 9. Comparison of results of participants' service quality scores according to their preference for the sports center

Variables	Preference	N	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Difference
Physical environmental quality	Reasonable price ^a	162	4,09	,70	1,348	,251	
	Service quality ^b	52	4,20	,65			
	Experienced staff ^c	38	4,17	,64			
	Variety of exercise programs and activities ^d	129	4,01	,63			
	Exercise Equipment ^e	14	3,84	,90			
Ambient conditions	Reasonable price ^a	162	4,33	,78	1,132	,341	
	Service quality ^b	52	4,31	,77			
	Experienced staff ^c	38	4,39	,70			
	Variety of exercise programs and activities ^d	129	4,21	,75			
	Exercise Equipment ^e	14	4,00	,96			
Exercise equipment	Reasonable price ^a	162	4,01	1,09	5,123	,000	d>e
	Service quality ^b	52	4,19	,79			
	Experienced staff ^c	38	4,40	,74			
	Variety of exercise programs and activities ^d	129	3,68	1,13			
	Exercise Equipment ^e	14	3,57	1,24			
Program quality	Reasonable price ^a	162	4,08	,99	4,117	,003	e>d
	Service quality ^b	52	4,34	,77			
	Experienced staff ^c	38	4,35	,85			
	Variety of exercise programs and activities ^d	129	3,79	1,16			
	Exercise Equipment ^e	14	3,95	,97			
Interaction quality	Reasonable price ^a	162	4,54	,62	,722	,577	
	Service quality ^b	52	4,53	,62			
	Experienced staff ^c	38	4,69	,42			
	Variety of exercise programs and activities ^d	129	4,60	,56			
	Exercise Equipment ^e	14	4,66	,50			
Output quality	Reasonable price ^a	162	4,67	,56	,506	,731	
	Service quality ^b	52	4,64	,60			
	Experienced staff ^c	38	4,60	,42			
	Variety of exercise programs and activities ^d	129	4,69	,54			
	Exercise Equipment ^e	14	4,51	,56			

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

In Table 9, the "One-way ANOVA" found that there were significant differences in the participants' service quality evaluation factors of exercise equipment and program quality scores according to their preference for the sports center ($p<.05$). According to the post-hoc Tukey results conducted to determine the source of the difference; it was found that the average score of those who preferred the

DISCUSSION

Nowadays, gyms and fitness centers have become one of the sports facilities that individuals frequently prefer and find quite attractive. The importance of the service quality provided in these centers has reached a point that cannot be ignored anymore. The positive perception of service quality by people can also encourage others to join these centers. Therefore, our research aimed to evaluate the perceptions of fitness sports center members regarding service quality.

The results of this study reveal that service quality factors are evaluated differently according to the demographic characteristics of the participants and that these characteristics affect the perceptions of service quality. The analyses show the effects of factors such as gender, age, education level, occupation, purpose of going to the sports center, training duration, and love for the sports center on

sports center for the variety of exercise programs and activities in exercise equipment was significantly higher than the average score of those who preferred the sports center for exercise equipment; and the average score of those who preferred the sports center for program quality was significantly higher than the average score of those who preferred the sports center for exercise equipment.

service quality. The findings in Table 3 show that there are significant differences between genders in the factors of "environmental conditions", "exercise equipment", "interaction quality" and "output quality" ($p<0.05$). According to the findings presented in Table 3, there are significant differences between genders in the factors of "environmental conditions", "exercise equipment", "interaction quality" and "output quality" ($p<0.05$). This finding provides important clues about how gender shapes perceptions and experiences in sports and exercise environments. The differences in the perceptions of male and female participants regarding these factors reveal that social gender roles and expectations are reflected in sports and exercise experiences (Çağlayan Tunç et al., 2020). The fact that men scored higher on exercise equipment and output quality may reflect the importance this group attaches

to physical performance and results-oriented approaches. On the other hand, the fact that women scored higher on interaction quality and environmental conditions shows that social interaction and environmental factors are more important to them. These differences reveal that sports centers and exercise programs should be organized to address the specific needs and expectations of gender (Vatansever and Gezen, 2019). These findings provide an important basis for achieving gender equality in sports and exercise areas and meeting the different needs of both genders. Sports centers and exercise programs can develop more inclusive and egalitarian approaches by taking these differences between genders into account. In this way, both men and women will have the opportunity to benefit from sports and exercise experiences in the best way (Öner, 2019). In addition, these data reveal that the service quality of gyms should be organized to meet the varying demands between genders.

The one-way ANOVA results in Table 4 show that there is no significant difference in service quality evaluation factors between age groups ($p>0.05$). This situation shows that there is a homogeneous structure in the perception of service quality depending on age. Studies show that the age factor does not play a decisive role in the evaluation of service quality and that different age groups similarly perceive service quality (Işık, 2017). This finding shows that service providers do not need to develop special strategies for certain age groups and that a general service quality standard may be sufficient for all age groups. It also emphasizes that focusing on general service quality elements instead of age-specific interventions may be more effective in terms of improving service quality (Erbay and Beydoğan, 2017). However, the absence of a significant difference between age groups reminds us that we should not ignore the fact that other demographic or psychographic factors may affect the perception of service quality (Yiğit, 2019).

The ANOVA results in Table 5 show that there are statistically significant differences between the "physical environmental quality" scores ($p<0.05$). Post Hoc analysis shows that the scores of the participants at the primary school level are higher than those of the other education groups. This finding reveals that the level of education is an important factor affecting the perception of service quality. The high scores of the participants at the primary school level also reveal how the level of education shapes the sensitivity and perceptions of individuals towards environmental factors (Üzüm et al., 2016). These results reveal that the level of education directly affects the perception of environmental quality of individuals. The higher scores of the participants at the primary school level indicate that this group is more sensitive and conscious of environmental factors. While the environmental education and awareness programs offered during the education process increase the perception of the environmental quality of individuals, this situation is also reflected in the perception of service quality (Kahyaoğlu et al., 2008). In addition, this finding emphasizes the role of the level of education in the perception of service quality and reveals the importance of education policies in creating environmental awareness. Environmental awareness-raising activities of

educational institutions improve individuals' perception of environmental quality, which in turn contributes positively to the perception of general service quality (Üzüm et al., 2016). These findings once again clearly show the importance of environmental education and awareness-raising activities.

The results of the ANOVA analysis related to occupational status in Table 6 show that there are statistically significant differences in the factors of "physical environment quality", "environmental conditions" and "program quality" ($p<0.05$). This finding reveals that the perceptions of occupational groups regarding certain factors differ. The fact that freelancers and coaches received higher scores compared to students may suggest that these groups attach more importance to work environments and program quality or have more experience in these matters (Çayır Ervural, 2020). Discussions on the reasons for these differences suggest that the expectations and experiences of occupational groups regarding work environments and program quality may be different. Freelancers tend to pay more attention to the quality of their work environment since they generally manage their businesses. Coaches, on the other hand, prioritize physical environment and program quality to increase the performance of athletes. Students, on the other hand, may have less experience in their perceptions regarding these matters or may have different priorities in evaluations (Dulkadir and Güçlüer, 2016). More experienced individuals, such as freelancers and coaches, generally expect higher quality standards, while less experienced individuals, such as students, may make assessments aimed at meeting more basic needs. These results indicate that work environment and program quality are perceived differently by occupational groups and that these differences may be related to the work experiences and expectations of the relevant groups. Therefore, considering the needs and expectations of occupational groups in the design of work environments and programs has the potential to increase employee satisfaction and performance (Etöz Mavi, 2022).

The findings in Table 7 show that the purpose of going to gyms significantly affects the participants' perceptions of service quality. The observation of statistically significant differences in factors such as "physical environment quality", "exercise equipment" and "interaction quality" reveals that various aspects of the services offered by gyms are perceived differently by the participants ($p<0.05$). This finding is consistent with the literature emphasizing that the motivation to attend gyms is an important factor that shapes individuals' expectations of service quality (Demir, 2016). In the literature, the effect of the motivation to attend gyms on the perception of service quality is frequently stated. For example, it is stated that individuals who regularly go to gyms value the physical environment quality and exercise equipment more, and these elements play a decisive role in their gym choices. In addition, it is seen that the interaction quality, that is, the attention and professionalism of the staff, is a critical factor that increases the participants' overall satisfaction and loyalty to the gym (Demir, 2016; Can and Kızılet, 2021; Zengin et al., 2022). In this context, gym managers need to understand the motivations and expectations of the participants to improve their service

quality accordingly. Increasing the quality of the physical environment, providing modern and diverse exercise equipment, and improving the quality of interaction of the staff can strengthen the competitive advantage of gyms and increase customer satisfaction. In addition, individuals who participate in exercise focus more on the quality of the equipment, while those who aim for social interaction can prioritize the quality of interaction. This situation reveals the necessity of gyms to customize their services in a way that suits their target audience.

The data in Table 8 show that there are statistically significant differences between the factors of "program quality" and "interaction quality" ($p < 0.05$). Individuals who exercise for a short time received higher scores than those who exercise for a long time. This shows that there is an inverse relationship between the duration of exercise and the perception of service quality. This finding provides important clues about how the duration of gym participation affects the perception of service quality. It is observed that individuals who exercise for a short time are more satisfied with the services offered by gyms and this satisfaction positively affects their perception of service quality. This may be due to the fact that they find the services offered by gyms fresher and more innovative. On the other hand, individuals who exercise for a long time may notice the deficiencies or monotony in the services more over time (Özen et al., 2016).

At the same time, individuals who exercise for short periods have more positive experiences in their interactions with the staff and therefore obtain higher scores in terms of interaction quality. Since they have just joined, they may feel more interest from the staff and this positively affects their perception of service quality (Balkan and Bulgurcuoğlu, 2023). Individuals who exercise for long periods may enter a routine in their interactions with the staff over time; this may negatively affect their perception of interaction quality. Therefore, it can be said that the satisfaction level of short-term users may be higher, while long-term users are more detailed in their evaluations of service quality. The analysis results in Table 9 reveal that there are statistically significant differences in the factors of "exercise equipment" and "program quality" ($p < 0.05$). The reasons for preferring sports centers significantly affect the perception of service quality. This finding is also frequently emphasized in existing literature. For example, it has been stated in many studies that the perceived service quality in sports centers is affected by various elements such as the physical environment, equipment quality, and the effectiveness of the programs. Among the factors affecting the service quality in fitness centers, the importance of

equipment diversity and programs prepared following the needs of individuals stand out (Yıldız et al., 2016; Üzüm et al., 2016; Yerlisu Lapa and Baştaç, 2012).

Such results reveal the necessity of sports center managers to increase the variety of equipment and develop programs suitable for the target audience. Providing quality equipment and creating programs that are aimed at individuals' fitness goals can increase the competitiveness of sports centers while also increasing user satisfaction. However, it should not be forgotten that users' preferences may vary according to demographic characteristics. This finding emphasizes the importance of providing gym services by customizing them according to users' requests.

Conclusions

As a result, it was determined that service quality elements vary depending on different demographic and individual characteristics. Factors such as gender, education level, occupation, purpose of going to the sports center, exercise duration, and sports center preferences significantly affect the perception of service quality by the participants. These findings emphasize the importance of sports center managers adapting their service offerings to the needs of their target audience and diversifying their services to meet the expectations of different demographic groups.

The results of this study reveal that various factors affecting service quality in sports centers may differ depending on demographic characteristics. In this context, it is of great importance for sports center managers to take demographic factors into account when diversifying their services and adapting them to their target audiences. In addition, customer satisfaction studies for sports centers can provide important guidance for improving service quality. Future studies can contribute to the development of new strategies for improving service quality by comparing the experiences of professionals and users working in different sports centers.

Ethics Statement: *In the present article, the ethical rules of the journal were followed in the research process in the current article. The responsibility for any violations that may arise regarding the article belongs to the author. The approval of Balıkesir University Ethics Committee dated 06.10.2023 and numbered E-19928322-100-304723 was obtained.*

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Çalışmanın Amacı

Bu araştırmanın amacı, fitness spor merkezleri üyelerinin hizmet kalitesine yönelik algılarını değerlendirmektir.

Araştırma Problemleri

Belediye çalışanlarının hizmet kalitesi puanlarının cinsiyete, yaş değişkenine, egzersiz süresine eğitim, meslek, spor merkezine öncelikle gitme ve spor merkezini tercih etme durumlarına göre farklılıkları nelerdir?

Literatur Araştırması

Tablo 3'te sunulan bulgulara göre "ortam koşulları", "egzersiz alet ekipmanları", "etkileşim kalitesi" ve "çıkış kalitesi" faktörlerinde cinsiyetler arasında anlamlı farklılıkların bulunduğunu göstermektedir ($p < 0,05$). Bu bulgu, cinsiyetin spor ve egzersiz ortamlarındaki algı ve deneyimleri nasıl şekillendirdiğine dair önemli ipuçları sunmaktadır. Erkek ve kadın katılımcıların bu faktörlere yönelik algılarındaki farklılıklar, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin ve beklentilerinin spor ve egzersiz deneyimlerine yansıdığını ortaya koymaktadır (Çağlayan Tunç et.al., 2020). Araştırmada hizmet kalitesinin yaşa bağlı algılanışında homojen bir yapı olduğunu göstermektedir. Yapılan araştırmalar, yaş faktörünün hizmet kalitesinin değerlendirilmesinde belirleyici bir rol oynamadığını, farklı yaş gruplarının hizmet kalitesini benzer bir şekilde algıladığını ortaya koymaktadır (Işık, 2017). Yine araştırmanın bulgularında eğitim seviyesinin hizmet kalitesi algısını etkileyen önemli bir faktör olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. İlköğretim düzeyindeki katılımcıların puanlarının yüksekliği, eğitim seviyesinin bireylerin çevresel faktörlere karşı duyarlılıklarını ve algılarını nasıl şekillendirdiğini de gözler önüne sermektedir (Üzüm et al., 2016). Ayrıca bu araştırma meslek gruplarının belirli faktörlere ilişkin algılarının farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Serbest meslek sahipleri ve antrenörlerin, öğrencilere kıyasla daha yüksek puanlar alması, bu grupların iş ortamlarına ve program kalitesine daha fazla önem verdiklerini veya bu konularda daha çok deneyime sahip olduklarını düşündürülebilir (Çayır Ervural, 2020). Araştırmamızın bir diğer bulgusu olan spor salonlarına katılma motivasyonunun, bireylerin hizmet kalitesine yönelik beklentilerini şekillendiren önemli bir faktör olduğunu vurgulayan literatürle uyumludur (Demir, 2016). Bu araştırmada kısa süreli egzersiz yapan bireyler, uzun süreli egzersiz yapanlara göre daha yüksek puanlar almışlardır. Ayrıca spor merkezlerini tercih etme nedenlerinin, hizmet kalitesi algısını önemli ölçüde etkilediği açıktır. Bu bulgu, mevcut literatürde de sıklıkla vurgulanmaktadır. Örneğin, spor merkezlerinde algılanan hizmet kalitesinin, fiziksel ortam, ekipman kalitesi ve

programların etkinliği gibi çeşitli unsurlardan etkilendiği birçok çalışmada belirtilmiştir. Fitness merkezlerinde hizmet kalitesini etkileyen unsurlar arasında, ekipman çeşitliliği ve bireylerin ihtiyaçlarına uygun şekilde hazırlanan programların önemi öne çıkmaktadır (Yıldız et al., 2016; Üzüm et al., 2016; Yerlisu Lapa ve Baştaç, 2012).

Yöntem

Araştırmanın Modeli: Bu çalışmada, değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri analiz etmek için ilişkisel tarama modeli tercih edilmiştir.

Araştırma Grubu: İzmir ili Bornova Belediyesi Spor İşleri Müdürlüğü'ne bağlı spor merkezlerine üye olan ve çalışmaya katkıda bulunmak üzere gönüllü olarak katılan 395 kişiden meydana gelmektedir.

Araştırma Yayın Etiği: Çalışma için 08.09.2023 tarihli ve (E-49846378-050.01.04-2300010585) numaralı Balıkesir Üniversitesi Akademik Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu'ndan etik kurul raporu alınmıştır.

Verilerin Toplaması: Araştırmada veri toplama amacıyla iki bölümden oluşan bir anket formu kullanılmıştır. İlk bölüm, katılımcıların demografik bilgilerini kapsamaktadır. İkinci bölüm ise katılımcıların spor ve fitness merkezlerindeki hizmet kalitesini algılamalarını değerlendirmek üzere "Spor-Fitness Merkezleri Algılanan Hizmet Kalitesi Ölçeği (SFM_HKÖ)" kullanılmıştır Uçan (2007).

Verilerin Analizi: İstatistiksel analizler için SPSS 22.0 programı kullanılmıştır. Analizler kapsamında, katılımcıların demografik özellikleri frekans ve yüzde analizleri ile değerlendirilmiştir. Hizmet kalitesi puanlarının cinsiyet, yaş, eğitim seviyesi ve diğer değişkenlerle karşılaştırılmasında: Bağımsız gruplar t-testi kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca Tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA), gruplar arasındaki farklılıkları test etmek için uygulanmıştır. ANOVA sonucunda anlamlı farklılıklar tespit edildiğinde, farklılığın hangi gruplar arasında olduğunu belirlemek için Tukey post hoc testi yapılmıştır.

Sonuç ve Değerlendirme

Sonuç olarak, hizmet kalitesi unsurlarının farklı demografik ve bireysel özelliklere bağlı olarak değişkenlik gösterdiği belirlenmiştir. Cinsiyet, eğitim seviyesi, meslek, spor merkezine gitme amacı, egzersiz süresi ve spor merkezi tercihleri gibi faktörler, katılımcıların hizmet kalitesini algılayışını önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Bu bulgular, spor merkezi yöneticilerinin hizmet sunumlarını hedef kitlelerinin ihtiyaçlarına göre uyarlamalarının ve farklı demografik grupların beklentilerini karşılayacak biçimde hizmetlerini çeşitlendirmelerinin önemini vurgulamaktadır.