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# **Development of Customer Satisfaction**

HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education



Bachelor's thesis

International Business

Valkeakoski, Spring 2016

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Valkeakoski  
International Business

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<b>Subject of Bachelor's thesis</b>	Development of Customer Satisfaction HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing	

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the thesis was to chart the level of customer satisfaction of the of the customers of the Häme University of Applied Sciences Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education and the factors influencing the customer satisfaction and customer dissatisfaction. The target was to describe and analyse customer satisfaction and clarify the current status of customer satisfaction with a customer satisfaction survey. The results were used to describe the strengths, challenges and weaknesses of the customer satisfaction. At the end the factors that could be used in order to improve the customer satisfaction were being observed.

The theoretical part of the thesis consists of charting the customer satisfaction and the meaning of it in an expert organization. The theory part concentrates on to the most important factors of customer satisfaction as well as customer satisfaction and customer dissatisfaction, the importance of customer satisfaction as competitive factor, the service quality and the development of customer satisfaction. The thesis also familiarizes the importance of customer satisfaction survey as a tool to figure out the level of customer satisfaction.

The research was executed by quantitative research method. The question form was made by the Interned based information gathering program (Webropol) used in the Häme University of Applied Sciences. It was send to the target group by E-mail. The survey was executed between 28.3.–17.4.2012. The survey was send to 132 customers and the response rate was 54%.

The current status of customer satisfaction was charted based on the survey results. The customers of the Continuing Education are mainly satisfied with the customer service and to the quality of service in general. The factors that demanded improvements were especially the lecturer's expertise, the organization's facilities and the accessibility of personnel by phone.

**Keywords** Customer satisfaction, customer service, customer loyalty

**Pages** 61 p. + appendices 8 p.

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International Business

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<b>Tekijä</b>	Terhi Tamminen	<b>Vuosi</b> 2016
<b>Työn nimi</b>	Development of Customer Satisfaction HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education	

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## TIIVISTELMÄ

Opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli kartoittaa Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulun Hyvinvointiosaamisen koulutus- ja tutkimuskeskuksen täydennyskoulutuksen asiakkaiden tyytyväisyyden tasoa sekä asiakastyytyväisyyteen ja tyytymättömyyteen vaikuttavia tekijöitä. Tavoitteena oli kuvata ja analysoida asiakastyytyväisyyttä sekä selvittää asiakastyytyväisyyden nykytila kyselyn perusteella. Tulosten perusteella kuvattiin asiakastyytyväisyyden vahvuuksia, haasteita ja heikkouksia. Lopuksi havainnointiin asioita joita voitaisiin parantaa asiakastyytyväisyyden kehittämiseksi.

Työn teoreettinen osuus koostuu asiakastyytyväisyyden ja sen merkityksen kartoittamisesta asiantuntijaorganisaatiossa. Teoriaosuudessa keskitytään asiakastyytyväisyyden tärkeimpiin tekijöihin, asiakastyytyväisyyteen ja tyytymättömyyteen, asiakastyytyväisyyden merkitykseen kilpailutekijänä, palvelun laatuun, asiakastyytyväisyyden kehittymiseen sekä perehdytään asiakastyytyväisyyskyselyn merkitykseen asiakastyytyväisyyden taustan selvittävänä työkaluna.

Tutkimus toteutettiin kvantitatiivisen tutkimusmenetelmän avulla. Kyselylomake tehtiin Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulussa käytössä olevalla Internet-pohjaisella tiedonkeruuohjelmalla (Webropol) ja lähetettiin valitulle kohde-ryhmälle sähköpostitse. Tutkimuksen ajankohta oli 28.3. - 17.4.2012. Kysely lähetettiin 132 asiakkaalle ja vastausprosentiksi saatiin 54 %.

Tutkimustulosten perusteella täydennyskoulutuksen asiakkaat ovat pääsääntöisesti tyytyväisiä asiakaspalveluun ja palvelun laatuun yleisesti, mutta kehittämistä edellytettäisiin erityisesti koulutuksiin valittujen luennoitsijoiden asiantuntemuksessa, tilajärjestelyissä sekä henkilöstön tavoitettavuudessa puhelimitse.

**Avainsanat** Asiakastyytyväisyys, asiakaspalvelu, asiakasuskollisuus

**Sivut** 61 s. + liitteet 8 s.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background information

Continuing education is a developing form of education that operates in the sidelong of Häme University of Applied Sciences. The need for continuing education is rising as the economic situation forces companies and organizations to lay off workforce. That is why many employees need to acquire more comprehensive know how and professional skills when they are fighting to maintain their employment or they are seeking for new employment opportunities. On the other hand as the economic depression goes further continuing education loses customers as companies and organizations want to save money and do not send their employees to courses any more. Also the funding from Government to the Office of Apprentice Ships is being cut down year after year which means a loss of an important funder of education to the customers of continuing education.

Customer satisfaction is one of the key competitive factors of how companies and organizations can differ from each other. As competition from customers is getting tougher the need to find out the level of customer satisfaction is important. That is the main reason this kind of customer satisfaction survey was needed in the Häme University of Applied Sciences Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. The research is also very current because similar research had not been done before in order to find out true customer needs and the level of customer satisfaction. Course feedback is asked from the customers after every course they participate in. Because course feedback only concentrates on to the course in question and not to the overall operations and services of the organization it was evident that this kind of survey was indicated.

### 1.2 Introduction of the assigning company of the research

At the time of the customer satisfaction survey at spring 2012 the assigning company was Häme Municipal Federation of Professional Higher Education which was formed by six member municipalities. The whole organization was formed by Häme University of Applied Sciences and Häme Vocational Institute. Since 2012 the organization structure has however changed so in this thesis the name of the institute and organizational structure described are based on the information from that time.

HAKKY determines the objectives concerning the key operations and finances on a higher level. Häme University of Applied Sciences is a higher education institution, which is authorised by the Government. The authorisation determines the educational mission, field of education and student numbers. Häme University of Applied Sciences has autonomy in its own internal affairs. The university name is shortened officially to HAMK.

<p><b>HAKKY</b> (Häme Municipal Federation of Professional Higher Education)</p>	
<p><b>HAMK</b> <b>(Häme University of Applied Sciences)</b>  around 7,500 students and around 1,050 in vocational teacher education  (tertiary education)</p>	<p><b>HAMI</b> <b>(Häme Vocational Institute)</b>  around 375 students  (secondary education)</p>

Figure 1 Organization Chart of HAKKY, HAMK and HAMI in 2012

As Figure 1 shows Häme University of Applied Sciences and HAMI Häme Vocational Institute form together HAKKY Häme Municipal Federation of Professional Higher Education. HAMK has about 7,500 students and around 800 staff members. There are six fields of education and 29 first-cycle degree programmes and options of which six are delivered in English. There is also 8 second-cycle degree programmes of which one is delivered in English. There are also options for open studies, professional specialisation studies and continuing education. The University has over 100 international partner institutions of higher education and about 17 ongoing projects.

HAMK has operations in six different locations around its main location Hämeenlinna. Beside the main unit in Hämeenlinna there are units in Valkeakoski, Forssa, Mustiala, Evo, Lepaa, and Riihimäki.

HAMK is also divided to Education and Research Centres according of its fields of education. The Education and Research Centres are Living Environment, Wellbeing, Business Administration, Technology Industries, Supply Chain Management, Industrial Service Business, Bio-economy, Vocational Teacher Education Unit and Master's Degree Programmes.

Häme University of Applied Sciences Continuing Education is part of the Häme University of Applied Sciences. It operates together with Häme University of Applied Sciences, Häme University of Applied Sciences Vocational Teacher Education Unit and Häme Vocational Institute and therefore it can benefit from all the competence they have. Continuing Education operates regionally and internationally and has about 130-150 education events every year.

HAMK Continuing Education offers competence development services for the needs of businesses, the public sector and the third sector as well as education and training services. There is a wide range of options for Con-

tinuing Education's customers to choose from. There are education products such as specific training for organisations and companies, seminars on topical subjects, short- and long-term training programmes and preparatory training for specialist qualifications. There are also a wide range of development projects and different funding channels customers to choose from.

Due to an organization remodelling in the 1st of August in 2010 the operative functions of HAMK Continuing Education moved to be a part of the Education and Research centres of Häme University of Applied Sciences. In that same time a new centralized entity was formed to control, direct and develop the continuing education. This entity is called Common Services of Continuing Education.

In the process the team that plans and co-ordinates education events and courses for the employers and employees of Welfare and Health Sector moved its functions to the same campus and building where Häme University of Applied Sciences Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing is located. And since the fall 2010 other teams have followed the same pattern in order to respond to the organization remodelling. Since then it has been possible for all the teams to exploit better the know-how and resources of lectures of the university and because of that producing high quality education events has been easier and productive for the whole Continuing Education.

This research concentrates on the Continuing Education that operates under Häme University of Applied Sciences Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing and produces education and training services for employees of Wellbeing and Health sector.

### 1.3 Targets and framing of the research

The level of satisfaction of the clients forms the base for a successful company. Satisfied customers guarantee a competitive edge for a company towards its competitors and are the way to ensure companies profitability.

This research aims to analyse and define customer satisfaction and to find out the level of satisfaction that the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education has towards organization's products and services. Another aim is to formulate an idea about the strengths, challenges and weaknesses of the customer satisfaction and to determine the facts that need to be improved in order to develop the customers' satisfaction level based on the findings from the customer satisfaction survey.

In the theoretical part the focus is on explaining what means the concept of customer satisfaction. The theory will also point out which are the key factors that form the base to a customer satisfaction. In this part the importance of customer satisfaction to the company's success is also described and also what are the elements of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.



This research is framed to concern those customers that are that customers of Continuing Education's that operates under the Häme University of Applied Sciences Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing.

The empiric part of the research consists of customer satisfaction survey that was sent to the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education that had participated to a continuing education course in the spring of 2012. The contact information of the target group was received from ASIO the system which is an enrolment mastery system at use in the assigning company Continuing Education. The results of the survey consists of both answers from individual customers that participated to courses based on their own interest and answers from customers that came to courses because of their own employer wanted them to increase their professional skills.

The research is very current because similar research had not been done before in order to find out true customer needs and the level of customer satisfaction. Course feedback is asked from the customers after every course they participate in. Because course feedback only concentrates on to the course in question and not to the overall operations and services of the organization it was evident that this kind of survey was indicated.

### 1.4 Research problem and definition of the research frame

This work aims to finding out the current level of customer satisfaction and what are the key elements that influence customer satisfaction. The research also concentrates on determining what actions to do in order to increase customer satisfaction based on the research findings of the customer satisfaction survey.

This research is framed to concern the customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education that participated to a continuing education course at spring 2012 or were participants of a course that had already started in the fall but their course was due to end in the spring 2012. Customers that the customer satisfaction survey was send were all participants of an open course.

### 1.5 The central concepts of the research

The central concepts of the research are

- customer satisfaction
- service quality
- the elements of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction
- development of customer satisfaction
- customer loyalty
- customer satisfaction survey

The concept of customer satisfaction is defined in the second chapter. The chapter also explains the significance of the customer satisfaction as a success factor for a company, formation of customer satisfaction, the ser-

vice quality, the elements of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction as well as the concept of customer loyalty. The final part in the chapter takes under closer discussion the customer satisfaction and internationalization in the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. After that the research concentrates on to the concept of customer satisfaction survey and to its importance in the chapter three.

Customer satisfaction and trough that accomplished customer loyalty are something that all companies as well as HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education strive for in their operations. Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are important aims for achieving long term customer relationships. Long term customer relationships and the free marketing that those satisfied customers do in favour for the organization are key factors for the company's productivity and reputation.

Customer satisfaction means that the customer feels that one's needs are fulfilled by the product or service that the customer buys from the company. Positive customer satisfaction leads into customer loyalty which means that the customer feels that one will be satisfied with the company's products or services every time one uses the products or services of the company. Customer loyalty can be considered as the most important thing that the company can use when trying to accomplish long term customer relationships.

Customer satisfaction survey is an important tool for companies to find out the true level of customer satisfaction that their customer have towards the company's products and services. Although the company is succeeding well it does not automatically mean that the customers are satisfied for the company. Customers can be forced to use the company for some other reasons that have nothing to do with the level of satisfaction they feel towards the company. Those reasons can be for example regional reasons, monopoly market situation or price of the product. If the market situation changes and competition increases customer satisfaction becomes one of the most important factors for the customers when they are deciding to which company they turn to. And because of that fact all companies should make customer satisfaction surveys at some point in order to better understand their customers and to better respond to the needs of their customers.

## 2 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

A satisfied customer is a lifeline for a company. According to Lahtinen and Isoviita (1994, 5) many researches show that customer satisfaction predicts most effectively the future success of a company. Especially in the service sector customer satisfaction is a crucially important success factor. Ylikoski (1999, 149) also states that a customer oriented company strives to reach its objectives precisely with customer satisfaction.

As described before customer satisfaction is very important to any company as a success factor and a tool to reach objectives. All companies should in fact be aware of the satisfaction level of their customers in order to secure their future success.

This chapter concentrates on describing what is customer satisfaction, how significant it is for a company's success, how the customers satisfaction is formed, what elements belong to it, how it can be developed. The chapter also explains what means service quality and customer loyalty. And finally there are facts about customer satisfaction and internationalization in the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education.

### 2.1 The concept of customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has many different definitions. The concept of customer satisfaction seems to have its foundation in the feelings that a customer experiences after a purchase of a product or a service used from a company. Lahtinen & Isoviita (1994, 5) describe that customer satisfaction is something that expresses the relation between expectations and experiences that a customer has towards customer service. Ylikoski (1999, 109) continues with likewise thoughts and says that customer's satisfaction towards purchase is formed by comparing expectations and experiences. Customer satisfaction means a positive emotion reaction to service experience. If a service gives the customer what is expected, the consumer is satisfied. Again if the expectations were greater than the benefit experienced by the customer, the customer will be disappointed and is unsatisfied. (Ylikoski 1999, 109.)

According to the previous definitions a conclusion can be drawn that a satisfied customer is likely to use the services of a company again. And that the feeling of satisfaction comes to the customers if the expectations meet the quality received. When a customer satisfaction survey was done to the customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education the customers gave an overall satisfaction grade of 4 in the scale of 1 to 5 which means that the customers were fairly satisfied to the organization. In the same research it came out that 39 % of the respondents could use the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education again and 49 % of the respondents said maybe to the question. When analysing the previous figures it is clear that most of the customers of HAMK Education and Re-

search Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education were satisfied and because of that they are potential customers also in the future.

Customer satisfaction also plays an important role when a company tries to deepen its customer relationships. Rope & Pöllänen (1998, 136) state that customer satisfaction is both a tool and a goal when deepening the customer relationships.

Customer satisfaction is one of the essential indicators when company's success possibilities are clarified and analysed now and in the future. Even if the company's economic outcomes would turn out to be no matter how good, the success in the long run cannot be expected if the level of customer satisfaction is not at least in a good level. (Rope & Pöllönen 1998, 58.) If a customer is using the services of an organization it does not necessarily mean that the customer is satisfied to the organization. There can be many other reasons beside satisfaction why the customer is using a particular organization. Those reasons can be e.g. that there is no other company that offers the same products or it is geographically reasonable to use the company because logistic expenses make it cheaper. The amount of 61% of customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education were affected by the fact that no similar courses were available in anywhere else when they made their choice. And up to 80% of the customers were affected by the fact that the organization's services were near the place where they lived in. Previous figures do not tell anything about the level of satisfaction but however they tell that there can be also other reasons behind the choices than customer satisfaction.

### 2.2 The significance of customer satisfaction as a success factor for a company

Customer satisfaction has many points that makes it very significant factor for the success of a company. Customer satisfaction is important according to Lahtinen & Isoviita (1994, 27) because satisfied customers will buy again, they are loyal to the company, they tell their experiences of the company to others, they increase the company's sales revenues, produce less marketing expenses and increase the profitability of the company. For the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education customer satisfaction is very important because according to the course feedback asked from the customers the results show that if the customer are satisfied it is likely that they will use the services of the organizations again and are willing to recommend the organization to others as well.

Customer satisfaction has become more important for the companies in recent decades as the competition has become tighter and the expectations of the customers have increased. A satisfied customer will buy again which enables continuance of the company's operations. In the future and in the new era customer orientation is not any more a choice for a company it is a requirement for surviving. In the chancing market situations, a customer orientation that passes through all the operations of a company will become increasingly the lifeline for the company. (Aarnikoivu 2005, 14.)

Customer satisfaction effects to the formulation of long term customer relationships. Lahtinen & Isoviita (1994, 28) state that solidity of the customer relationship between the customer and the organization varies. It is evident that there are different kinds of customers in every company and organization. Some customers are occasional customers and some long term customers. It is clear that company or an organization should strive for getting as many long term customers as possible. This is because regular customers do not end the customer relationship as easily as short term customers if the long term customer has a long history of satisfaction towards the company or the organization and its services. Whereas a short term customer may end the customer relationship very easily after a bad experience because of the lack of long history with the company or an organization.

Lahtinen & Isoviita (1994, 29) state that customers can regularly be asked, in what they are satisfied with and what are the matters that should be improved. Especially if the customer ends the customer relationship it is important to ask why that happened. There can be many reasons behind ending of the customer relationship. If the reason is dissatisfaction it is vital for the organization to know about it so something can be done to the matter before other customers react by ending their customer relationship as well.

The experiences of customer are divided into different levels of satisfaction according to the intensity and direction of the experience in relation to expectations. This fact is very significant because the customer's reactions to the company are formed by the level of the satisfaction. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 40-41.)

The different levels of satisfaction and types of customers are deeply disappointed customers, slightly disappointed customers, an experience according expectations customers, slightly positively surprised customers and strongly positively surprised customer. Deeply disappointed customers can be the most harmful customers to the company because not only that kind of customers may end the customer relationship but they can also spread negative things about the company. Ending the customer relationship and negative mouth to mouth communication is possible especially when the company does not react to complaints in a way that disappointing situation is compensated and the feeling of disappointment is eliminated (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 41).

Slightly disappointed customers do not always complain about the poor service but they tend to choose a different company next time. Also these customers will recommend others some other company if they are asked their experiences about a certain company they have used. The essential thing is that those customers do not react about their disappointments to the company if the company does not have a continuous system to collect the customer feedback fast and easily from the customers. Traditionally the ending of the customer relationship is the only way that slightly disappointed customers pass off the situation if the company does not have customer satisfaction feedback system. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 41.)

An experience according expectations customers are the kind of customers which do not react at a visible way at all and that means that they are the most difficult ones to the company. The reaction to disappointing experiences can vary depending on the experience. In the most extreme cases the customer will end the customer relationship at once. Sometimes customers may stay as customers but will seek out other better solutions and as something better comes along they will immediately end the old customer relationship and move on to be customers of some other company.

Slightly positively surprised customers do not usually give positive feedback on their own initiative about their experiences in any other way than by continuing the customer relationship (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 41). But these customers are very useful to the company because usually if asked these customers will recommend the company and its products to others.

Strongly positively surprised customers are such that will on their own initiative thank about the treatment they have got or from the product they have used. Another sign from these customers is that they may tell their friends about "an amazing incident", when the positive familiarity and image is spread by mouth to mouth communication. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 41- 43)

As stated earlier satisfied customers require less marketing expenses from the company and they tell their positive experiences to others and that way they are a free market channel for a company. According to Lahtinen & Isoviita (1994, 7) service is one of the most important tool for the competition of marketing. They continue that it is easy to copy objects but copying good service is difficult. Especially in situations where the competitive products are equally good according to the customers the decisive things are service and other marketing actions not the product itself. Often the case is that also the competitive products are equally good on the customer's opinion. So this is why the purchasing decision is often done based on the customer service, the image of the company and the product, recommendations, efficient marketing or based on proficient sales work. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 2004, 2.)

Another essential point of customer satisfaction is that customers market the companies and the products and services without even noticing it. Satisfied customers are a powerful marketing tool for companies whereas unsatisfied companies can do some serious harm when they tell their negative experiences about the company. According to researches a customer that has had good service tells about it to three other persons. On the other hand an unsatisfied customer will tell about their negative experiences on average to eleven other persons. According to a Finnish research to repair one negative service experience takes on average 12 positive experiences before the negative memories disappear from the memory. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 2004, 2-3.)

It is also obvious that a satisfied customer will come more easily back to use the same company or its products and services whereas an unsatisfied customer will more likely seek for other options. This also means that the

more a customer uses the company or its services and products and is satisfied or his expectations are even exceeded the more the customer relationship will deepen and a positive cycle will be born.

A satisfied customer is also less time-consuming and energy consuming than an unsatisfied customer is. According to a Finnish research getting back a lost customer is even 27 times more expensive than maintaining a regular customer relationship. Acquiring new customers is about 10 times more expensive than selling to a regular customer. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 2004, 3.)

### 2.3 Formation of customer satisfaction

According to Rope and Pöllänen (1998, 59) customer satisfaction is relative and always subjective, individual perception. From that a conclusion can be drawn that every customer has different expectations towards the operations, products and services of a company because people are different and observe things in various ways. The expectations can be born in various ways for example from the previous experiences the customer has had, from marketing of the company or perhaps from a mouth to mouth communication of other customers. The possibilities of how the expectations of every customer are born are countless.

A formation of customer satisfaction is also described as follows. Whether the buyer is satisfied after purchase depends on the offer's performance in relationship to the buyer's expectations, and whether the buyer interprets any deviations between the two (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hansen 2009, 389). As a conclusion to the statement a customer is dissatisfied if the performance of the company, its services or products do not meet the expectations of the customer. Again the customer is satisfied if the performance matches the expectations. But if the performance turns out to be so good that it exceeds the expectations the customer is satisfied or even delighted.

Customer assessments of product performance depend on many factors, especially the type of loyalty relationship the customer has with the brand. Consumers often form more favourable perceptions of a product with a brand towards which they already feel positive. (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hansen 2009, 389.) This means that if a customer is already familiar to a company or its products the customer satisfaction level is more likely to be positive again than if the customer is dealing with a totally unknown company or a brand. A new customer is always more difficult to please than an old customer that has already had positive experiences with the company.

In contact with customer satisfaction and quality of service critical incidents are talked that can swing a stable state of customer satisfaction very fast. Critical incident can be positive or negative and criticism is born from either that, that the experience is unusually important to the customer or that the experience varies very strongly from the expectations. (Arantola 2003, 34.) As the writer states sometimes the customer satisfaction can

be very fragile. And because of that companies should bear in mind that dealing with disappointments of customers well it can actually strengthen the customer relationships if the corrective actions are done fast and well. On the other hand if not done so the customer relationship can also end as fast as it has started in the first place.

Because customer satisfaction formulates altogether from the subjective experiences of a customer in the contact surface of a company, it is in great proportion tied to the present moment. Customer satisfaction is then claimed over and over again in the daily contacts with the customer. Customer satisfaction requires always continuous systematic measurement. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 59.) This is why continuous feedback should be asked from the customers in the customer contact situations in order to receive current information about the satisfaction level of the customers and do the corrective actions as soon as possible if the level of satisfaction was not as good as it should have been. With the help of the surveys can also be found out the company's own situation, own strengths and weaknesses in relation to competitors (Ylikoski 1999, 149).

In the case of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing continuous feedback is asked from the customers after every course or seminar day concerning the course or seminar day the customers participate in. But on the other hand more accurate feedback surveys should be also done regularly concerning the overall level of satisfaction towards the organization and its services to get a true overall picture about the satisfaction of the customers.

Companies should also to reply to the customer feedback. Customers need to know that something is done to the matters they were unsatisfied with in order to stay satisfied to the company. According to Ylikoski (1999, 149) the satisfaction questionnaires as such are not enough. Also actions that are based on to the follow up are needed, by which the customer satisfaction is being improved. Customers will be disappointed if they are constantly asked feedback about the level of their satisfaction and no corrective actions are done based on their opinions. It is essential to the positive formulation of customer satisfaction that the customers feel that they are heard and that way given the sense of importance.

### 2.4 The service quality

Because the quality of service influences greatly in to the entity from which the customers formulate their customer satisfaction perception, the customer satisfaction can also be discussed through the quality level of service a company possess.

The significance of service quality has strongly increased in the recent years. As it is much harder to separate one-self from products of the competitors, it is possible to make the supply different with service. Also in the service sector it is much harder for organizations to separate themselves from each other with the core service they offer. (Ylikoski 1999, 117.)



In today's markets companies invent new products and solutions for their customers at increasing speed and yet it is nearly impossible for them to separate themselves from their competitors because of new inventions will get followers very soon. Because of that fact companies have to invent new ways to survive in the competitive market situation. The solution for many companies has been realizing that the quality of service has become a significant competitive resource. With quality service a company can strive to separate itself from competitors and to allure new customers. Service quality has also an essential role when maintaining the current customers' customer satisfaction. (Ylikoski 1999, 117.)

All customers value and want to get good service whatever product or service they are after. The difficult thing for a company is that good service means different things to different people. In fact good service can even mean different things to the company itself compared to the customers they are pursuing. Customer orientation demands that the quality of the service is looked at with the customer's eyes. An organization must then clarify what things the customers that the company tries to pursue value. (Ylikoski 1999, 117.) If a customer expects to get full-service he will only be satisfied with a company that offers that. Another customer on the other hand can be happy with self-service and to a company with lower level of personal contacts. That is the reason why companies operating in the same field can have satisfied customers with a totally different level of service.

The quality image is formulated when the customer compares the service experience to his own prior expectations. The prior expectations should not then be set too high, because the customer will be disappointed greatly if the expectations do not come through. On the other hand the customer will not take contact to the company if his expectations are negative. If the customer has negative prior expectation, he is sensitive to notice everything that will confirm his prior expectations. The customer often looks at the company through colourful and distortive classes. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 2000, 63.) These conclusions confirm what can also be seen in the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. Customers that have had positive experiences in the past are likely to come to the courses again. But the customers will compare their service experiences to their prior expectations and in order to get positive feedback from the courses the customers' expectations should be met over and over again.

The customer's expectations from the quality formulates from what the customer gets as end result of the service and how the actual service process went. These two quality factors are called technical or end-result quality and operational or process-quality. The way the service is produced may be even more important to a customer than the service's end result. (Ylikoski 1999, 118.) This definition of service quality is especially true in the education business. The most satisfied customers that the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education has had are those that value the whole course and the learning itself more than the actual course degree they will get at the end of the course. The interaction between the personnel of the service organization and the

customer is then the most important factor when a good service experience is formulated.

The third quality factor is the customers' image from the organization/ corporate image or image. The image acts as a filter for the quality experience. The customer sees the technical and especially the process-quality through that filter. A good image filters occasional small and sometimes bigger mistakes so that no matter the mistakes the customer experiences the level of quality satisfied. (Ylikoski 1999, 118.)

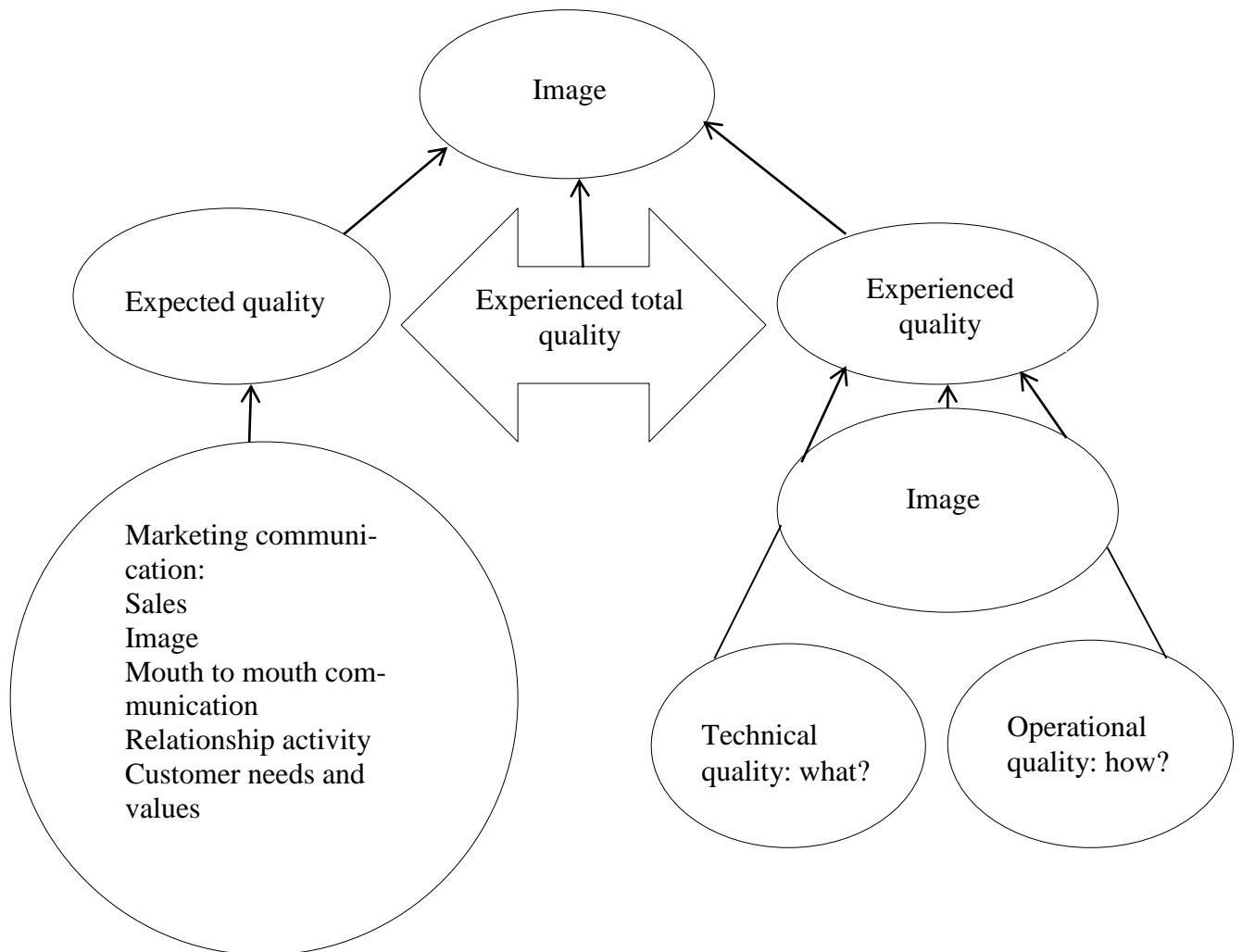


Figure 2 Experienced total quality (Grönroos 2009, 105)

The figure 2 shows all the dimensions and factors that are related to how the customer experiences the service quality. Above the whole picture is image which is the customers overall opinion from the company. Image can be either positive or negative. Below the image is a factor that has influenced the image the customer has formulated. This factor is experienced total quality. The experienced total quality is influenced by two factors which are expected quality and experienced quality. Expected quality is a sum of a variation of different factors such as mouth to mouth communication and customers' needs and values. Some of them are the kinds of things that cannot be influenced by the company in any way. Experi-

enced quality on the other hand is formulated by technical quality which means what the customer gets from the service. And operational quality which means how the customer is being served. And again the image acts as a filter for the quality experience. In a way the experienced total quality is a scale that stays in balance when the expected quality and experienced quality are equal. The most favourable situation for the company is when the experienced quality side is heavier than the expected quality side. Then the customer's expectations from the service quality are met and even exceeded.

The quality expectations that a customer focuses towards services varies a lot. From the core service he justly expects at least acceptable level of service. From the secondary service areas the customer does not worry very easily small quality problems, if the customer relationship altogether works well. (Rissanen 2006, 215.)

The customer is the most important indicator and sensor about the service quality of a company. There are several factors according to which customers forms their opinion about the service quality:

1. *Competence and expertise.* Means the service producer's professional skills in the core area of the service.
2. *Dependability.* The service is produced assertively and in a perfectly way, which creates a feeling of trust in the customer towards the producer's case management. Also the invoice is clear, individualized, and according to what has been agreed.
3. *Credibility.* Customer gains a trust that the service producer will operate in a way that is required by the customer's benefit.
4. *Accessibility.* The customer can reach the service in a moderate way.
5. *Security.* The customer feels security especially when the previous values have been fulfilled in the service.
6. *Politeness.* The service producer's clothing, behaviour and the whole personality communicates consideration, appreciation and respect to the customer.
7. *Willingness to be of service, service response.* In a service situation messages that have been spoken or sent to the customers before and after are understandable, open and not too long.
8. *Communication.* A high quality communication is clear and understood by the customer.
9. *Identification and understanding of customer needs.* The service producer has expertise how to deepen and ensure the customer's service needs.

10. *The service environment.* With this are meant the factors related to comfort, atmosphere, visual, cleanliness in a restaurant and smells etc. In many services the ecological aspects have become considerable. (Rissanen 2006, 215-216.)

When quality of service is discussed it is important to understand that different customers can have different expectations towards service in order to be satisfied. The expectations can vary from ideal service to acceptable service. Service expectations can be divided (Tore Strandvik/ Research idea 2/1994, 5) to six groups:

1. Ideal service, desired service
2. Best experienced service
3. Expected service
4. Typical service in the field of operation
5. Deserved service, rightful service
6. Acceptable service

Ideal service means service that is agreeable to customer. Best experienced service is the kind of service that a customer has managed to get in some particular field of business. Expected service describes the level of service that the customer expects to have. Expected service might be in a slightly higher level than what is typical service in that field of business. At times customer can satisfy in expecting only rightful, deserved service. Every customer has his own insight what is the lowest accepted service. Customer can however be dissatisfied even if that level exceeds. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 1994, 28.)

It has been discovered in the surveys that the service experience rarely exceeds ideal level or even reaches the ideal level, even though the customer expresses to be satisfied. A Finnish customer does not necessarily complain even if he is dissatisfied with the service he got. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 1994, 28.) This fact can also be seen in the customer satisfactions surveys of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. After a course day is over customers are often asked verbally and informally what they thought about the day and lectures, service and so on. Often it is the case that customers express their satisfaction but when the course feedback is read afterwards the grades are not that good after all. And in fact customers often find many things they were dissatisfied with and mentioned those only in the questioning forms and not when talked on face to face basis. This is why a customer servant should not assume that the service is perfect when so few customers complain verbally. In every company and corporation all the customer servants must continuously try to better their services, in order to make as many customer satisfied as possible. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 1994, 28.)

### 2.5 The elements of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction

The company's different operational factors are not equivalent when producing satisfaction. Likewise in different situations different customer's assembly the meaning of company's operational factors in different way.

Slightly generalizing the matter one can state that generally the factors that produce satisfaction are different than factors that produce dissatisfaction. (Rope 2005, 557.)

The factors that produce satisfaction and dissatisfaction can roughly be divided in to two:

<b>Satisfaction factors</b>	<b>Dissatisfaction factors</b>
Exceptionally good individual customer service	Braking down agreed matters e.g. schedules, product qualities, delivery certainty
Situational excellent handling of customer's problem situation	Unstable level of operations or operation that falls behind from the expected imago
Giving surprising extra positive element with the product	Extras in the invoice (e.g. additional fee for small deliveries) that the customer was not informed before hand
Exceptionally good handling of a complaint	Unexpected increase in the prices that revealed to customer when invoiced
Giving advice to fix customer's problem situation	Not dealing with the complaints or not informing about them
Offering cheaper or better quality solution than what the customer asked for	Not reacting to customer requests e.g. call requests

Figure 3 The reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Rope 2005, 558)

As can be seen from the figure 3 the satisfaction factors and dissatisfaction factors are not opposed to one another. This can be explained simply by realizing that if some factor in the company's service does not work it obviously and certainly causes dissatisfaction. But again if the same factor works as promised the customer does not necessarily feel any more satisfied than usual. This is the case for example if delivery certainty of a company is analysed. When the customer receives his order late he will be highly disappointed and unsatisfied. But if he gets the order in time he will not feel overly satisfied either because the service did not exceed the company's service quality in any way but the service reached only the level what was promised in the first place. Behind this is a thing according to which satisfaction factor experienced by the customer is something that produces a positive surprise to the customer. Instead things that function according to expectations do not produce satisfaction so it is the expected factor that is automatically expected to happen (according to expectations). (Rope 2005, 558.)

Rope (2005, 558) continues that a name requirement factor can be used from the word expectation factor. Those are factors that are assumed to work in order to be satisfied with the product. Unmet expectations or un-realized requirement factors will trigger dissatisfaction so they are factors of dissatisfaction.

Total satisfaction is formed always by realization degree of fulfilment of expectation levels and what is the relation between the satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors (Rope 2005, 559). Sometimes some satisfaction factors can be used to compensate some dissatisfaction factors. For example if the customer's delivery is late exceptionally good individual service can be used to compensate the situation so that the customer's overall satisfaction level would stay positive. But often the case is so that the dissatisfaction factor weights more than the satisfaction factor no matter what corrective actions are done to maintain the customer satisfied to the total service situation.

### 2.6 Development of customer satisfaction

Developing customer satisfaction starts with concentrating on to the customers. Storbacka, Blomqvist, Dahl & Haeger (2003, 85) state that although it is risky to too much concentrate on to the customers because customers don't know all the answers the customers' voice should be regularly heard. From that a conclusion can be drawn that the best way to develop customer satisfaction and still maintain a reasonable way to conduct the business operations successfully is to find a happy medium when trying to listen the customers' voice.

Especially the customers should be heard on the following matters:

- *Finding out the reasons behind choices.* Customers choose their companies and services for different reasons. If the reasons behind the choices can be found out the company can see what developments areas there are in the company's own offerings compared to the competitor's offerings. (Storbacka & others 2003, 86.)
- *Occasions and checking.* The information gathered during the critical occasions of customer relationship give the company perspective about the needs and expectations of their current customers. The continuity of the checking process and having contact with most of the customers on regular basis will make it also possible to see trends and changes happening in time. (Storbacka & others 2003, 86.)
- *Customer complaints.* The information that is gathered from the unsatisfied customers is a natural starting point to development of processes (Storbacka & others 2003, 86). Especially in some cultures customers find it difficult to speak out their disappointments and they tend to abandon their customer relationships without telling the company the right reason behind their choice. So if the company gets a complaint it should be taken seriously because then there is still something to be done before the customer goes to the competitor's.

- *The loss of customers.* Customers that decide to change their supplier can teach the company a lot about taking care of the customer relationships. In different occasions it has been revealed that these customers are open and direct in their communication. If the customer relationship is about to end or has already ended the customer has no reason to be polite or keep the truth only to themselves. (Storbacka & others 2003, 86.)

The information that concerns the customers' attitudes, experiences and behaviour is important always when the company evaluates and directs its operations in different ways. In this context there are two points that should be concentrated. First of all information about customer database system is needed to operation follow-up system. Secondly it is important to follow and evaluate customer dialog on the regular bases. (Storbacka & others 2003, 87.) In the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Well-being Continuing Education the customer dialog is continuously evaluated after each course and sometimes even after a one course day if there has been something new or evidently atypical lecture.

### 2.7 Customer loyalty

Customer loyalty is an essential part of customer satisfaction and in fact customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty in many cases. The concept of customer loyalty is however hard to define because there seems to be many interpretations to the term. Arantola (2003, 9) describes the concept of customer loyalty to mean that there are a certain amount of repurchase during a certain amount of time. Customer loyalty does not require any emotional attachment or intention to stay as a customer. Customer loyalty is a complex phenomenon. When the customer has different choices the customer loyalty is not generally a state where the customer is either loyal or not but the customer loyalty has many different levels. (Ylikoski 1999, 173.)

Customer loyalty can mean different things in different situations. The four different definitions to customer loyalty depending on the target are brand loyalty, service loyalty, supplier loyalty and shop loyalty. Depending on the customer loyalty's foundation there are definitions such that originate from image, marketing or sales. There are also those definitions that the foundation originates from information, feeling or activity. (Arantola 2003, 26.) The fact that customer loyalty can mean different things in different situation can be described for example with a following situation. A customer is used to grocery shop in a certain supermarket A which does not belong to the chain the customer has regular customer relationship and discount cards (supermarket B). But because the supermarket A has better selection of goods than the supermarket B to which the customer has regular customer relationships, the customer is more loyal to the supermarket A than to the chain where the regular customer relationship is (supermarket B).

Customer loyalty is often analysed only through the information concerning the customer's buying behaviour. Then the interest is only towards the

information of how long and how often the customer has used the service. The customer is then considered to be loyal when he has used the same organization's service continuously for a longer period of time. (Ylikoski 1999, 173.) Again referring to the supermarket example the buying behaviour of a customer can be deceiving when determining customer loyalty. For example this question can be raised; to which company the customer is more loyal to? The one the customer has so called regular customer relationship and discount card or the one the customer actually uses in every day groceries shopping?

Because concerning most services customers have many options to choose from so the customer loyalty or lack of it can present itself in many different ways. According to Ylikoski (1999, 174-175) there are different levels of customer loyalty that are undivided customer loyalty, shared loyalty, loyalty of opportunism or ignorance and loyalty where deviations may happen. The definitions above can be demonstrated as follows. Customer expresses undivided loyalty as customer always uses the services of one particular organization. For example the customer has concentrated all his bank dealing to one bank. Shared loyalty is shown when the customer uses the services of a few competitive organizations e.g. has bank accounts in two different banks. Opportunism or ignorance means that the customer takes the benefits of several organizations and not being particular loyal to any of them. The customer can e.g. seek for offers from news-papers and then buy the particular product from the shop that has advertised the offer. Deviations in loyalty may present itself sometimes which means to the organization that the customer relationship is lost for some period of time or permanently.

The behaviour of the customer tells only one side of his loyalty. Loyalty can be apparent or be due to circumstances. So in order to get a deeper perspective to loyalty the customers' attitudes beside the behaviour must be concluded in to the analysis. Customer loyalty reveals itself also so that the customer regards the particular service organization significantly positive than to the competitive organizations. From the positive attitudes will result in positive feelings towards the organization and its supply. In the most profound cases the customer loyalty presents itself in a way that customer chooses more preferably just the services of the particular organization and not the competitive services. (Ylikoski 1999, 175-176.)

Ylikoski (1999, 176) continues that the true customer loyalty is formed by three essential components that are the duration of the customer relationship, the customer's emotional attachment to the organization and centralized relationship. By the component of duration of the customer relationship is meant the duration of time that the customer has stayed as a customer to a same organization. The customer's emotional attachment to the organization means that the customer in most extreme cases can form a friendship with the service producer or at least feels positively about the organization in a way that reinforces the customer relationship. Centralized relationship expresses itself when the customer has several regular customer relationships with several different organizations.



As a conclusion Ylikoski (1999, 177) continues that a loyal customer can be considered a customer that all the time trusts that the organization fulfils completely (or for the most part) his needs that are part of the organizations offerings. True customer loyalty can be seen in some long standing customer relationships of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education when the time that the customer relationship, the attitudes towards the organization (even friendships between the staff and the customer) and the centralization of purchases are being evaluated.

Loyalty however is not a permanent state. The customer's loyalty or the share from the customer's heart can be lost. (Ylikoski 1999, 177.) From lost customer relationships almost all organizations have examples. No matter how stabile the relationship has been it can on the other hand be lost almost as quick as it has started. If the trust between the organization and the customer shakes for some reason the customer may turn to other competitive organizations and take his wallet with him.

Because service organizations are different to one another the customer loyalty is measured in different ways. Usually the thing that is measured is behaviour: how often the customer purchases, the monetary value of the purchases and customer constancy. (Ylikoski 1999, 177.) A term of customer constancy is used when duration of customer relationships are observed both in the short and long periods of time. For example if 50 % of the last years customers are also customers this year it means that the customer constancy figure is 50 %. Although the customer constancy can be a useful tool for a company to study its customer relationships and customer loyalty it is only a figure that tells only little about the true nature and status of customer relationships.

Another way how a company can measure its customer loyalty is the amount of lost customers (Ylikoski 1999, 177). A company can measure the amount of lost customers by defining how many percentage of the total amount of customers is lost during some specific period of time. In order to get vital information about the customer relationships the organization can also try to define what the probability that a customer relationship will continue is.

The results of the customer satisfaction surveys can give important information about the reasons behind the weakening of the customer loyalty. Analysing the leaving reasons for lost customers can sometimes reveal flaws and correcting them can the customer constancy be improved. (Ylikoski 1999, 178.)

### 2.8 Customer satisfaction and internationalization in the organisation

Internationalizations of organizations have brought new challenges for organizations when they are trying to secure satisfied customers. People that have different cultural background and different values inherent from their culture have also different aspects that make them satisfied customers compared to domestic Finnish customers. When an organizations is trying

to pursue foreign customers it should be aware of the difference in satisfaction preferences in order to succeed in their business dealings with people from different nationalities.

HAMK's internationalization objects are stated in the Development Plan for Internationalisation 2015. The strategy is based on the alignments of Ministry. The development plan describes that HAMK's vision for international activities means following aspects. At HAMK the international perspective is a natural part of all our activities and our environment is highly international with a tolerant atmosphere. The international partner network has a significant role both in education and research, and students and staff members participate actively in international networks. (Development Plan for Internationalization 2015, 3.)

Internationalization at HAMK has had a significant impact on the internationalization of the region's enterprises and the community. There are several workable and effective cooperation models in use. The strategic partners and other actors in the target areas experience and value HAMK as a higher education institution and partner. (Development Plan for Internationalization 2015, 4.)

In practice as the Development Plan for Internationalization 2015 states this means that HAMK has internationalization concerning strategic partnerships and target areas, internationalization of education process, internationalization of education process / student mobility, international degree programs, immigrant education, RDI (research and development), global responsibility, export of expertise, internationalization of the region and personnel. (Development Plan for Internationalization 2015, 5-14.)

HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education will function in the future according the internationalization vision focusing on the immigrant education and export of expertise sectors because those sectors involve continuing educations products and services. The organization has already participated to competitive biddings of the Finnish office of Centre of Economic Development, Transport and the Environment concerning an education program to support immigrants' employment opportunities but did not win the bidding. But in the future the orientation will be more and more focused on similar products and services.

### 2.8.1 Cultural dimensions Theory – Geert Hofstede

One significant theory that can be helpful for the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education as striving to become more international and dealing with foreign students is the theory of Cultural Dimensions by Geert Hofstede.

Geert Hofstede (1928) is a Dutch social psychologist who did a pioneering study of cultures across modern nations: Cultural Dimensions Theory. In his studies he originally found four different dimensions of culture and later he added the theory with a fifth dimension to compensate the theory. The different dimensions are power distance, collectivism versus individ-

ualism, femininity versus masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and opposing a long-term orientation in life to a short-term orientation. (Wikipedia) The understanding of the different cultural dimensions can help in dealings with different people from different nationalities. This is important especially in the field of education.

The definitions of the five different dimensions:

**Power distance:** Describes the attitude of people with less power to the unequal distribution of power in the society. In the high power distance countries everyone has their own place in the hierarchy and the position is not questioned. In the societies on low power distance people question the distribution of power and they have a desire to balance it. (Wikipedia) In practice this can mean that in a classroom students that come from high power distance countries do not question what the teacher says and may be used to teachers monologue way of teaching. In opposite the students that come from low power distance countries usually have the ability to challenge the teachers more, bring out their own opinions and question more about the matter at hand. There is no saying which way is better for learning but the understanding of these two different ways is to avoid confusion amongst the students and teachers.

**Collectivism versus individualism:** This dimension analyses to which degree people in a society are integrated into groups. In individualistic societies people have loose ties with each other. The ties often only relate an individual to his/her immediate family. Its counterpart, collectivism, describes a society in which tightly-integrated relationships tie extended families and others into in-groups. (Wikipedia) Collectivism versus individualism can also be observed to which extent people are willing to look after themselves as a group versus people only looking after themselves. Obviously in high collectivism countries the people look after themselves in groups as in high individualism countries people can be considered to be more self-centred. This can be shown also in the classroom as students from high collectivism countries tend to seek a group around them and prefer group work. These students can struggle if they have to make decisions by themselves and take responsibilities along. As students from high individualism countries may find group work difficult because they are used to carry out the responsibilities by themselves. It can be hard for them to rely on others and make mutual decisions together with the group.

**Uncertainty avoidance:** This dimension can be defined as a society's tolerance for ambiguity, in which people embrace or avert an event of something unexpected, unknown, or away from the status quo. (Wikipedia) Countries that have high uncertainty avoidance have a population that is accustomed to stiff codes of behaviour, guidelines, laws, and generally rely on absolute Truth. Opposing the previous, countries that have low uncertainty avoidance show more acceptances of differing thoughts/ideas. Society tends to impose fewer regulations, ambiguity is more accustomed to, and the environment is more free-flowing. (Wikipedia) In practice this can show itself how well e.g. students obey timetables. A person that comes from a culture of low uncertainty avoidance can have annoying habit of coming late to lessons. This is opposite to a person that possesses

high uncertainty avoidance that believes in rules and comes on time. These two different kinds of students also can respond differently when some kind of changes appear e.g. to the course at hand. A person with ability to handle changes (low uncertainty avoidance) takes this well whereas a person that is used to strict plans and regulations may find the new situation difficult.

**Masculinity versus femininity:** A masculinity side of the dimensions is a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. Its opposite, femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. (Wikipedia) In practice this dimension can show itself when a student from a masculine country and a student from a feminine country are comparing their values and what is important in life in general. A student from the masculine country is more likely to be more career-oriented and competitive than the student from a feminine country that may have softer values and is not after external success.

**A long-term orientation in life to a short-term orientation:** This dimension associates the connection of the past with the current and future actions/challenges. Countries that have a short-term orientation in life traditions are honoured and kept, while steadfastness is valued. Societies with a high long-term orientation view adaptation and circumstantial, pragmatic problem-solving as a necessity. A poor country that is short-term oriented usually has little to no economic development, while long-term oriented countries continue to develop to a point. (Wikipedia) This dimension can also be seen as a difference between the attitudes of students to success. A student of a short-term orientation in life attributes success and failure to luck. A student of a long-term orientation in life attributes success to effort and failure to lack of effort.

### 3 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Succeeding in customer service is measured by customer satisfaction surveys (Lahtinen & Isoviita 1999, 64). Every organization level has its own sort of idea whether their customers are satisfied or not. The top level of the organization has its own perspective about the matter and the personnel in contact with the customers have their own. The complaints the customers have done, has information about the matters that the customers were unsatisfied with. This is all valuable information but this does not tell sufficiently the extent of the customers' opinions. In order to get the sufficient information a customer satisfaction follow up system is needed. (Ylikoski 1999, 155.)

Customer satisfaction is sometimes understood to be a far too technical thing. Customer satisfaction is hard to certificate or give points to it. It encompasses a lot of things that are hard to measure with "tick the box" types of forms. (Lahtinen& Isoviita 1999, 64.)

With customer satisfaction surveys the quality of satisfaction is tried to be improved and to follow up how the actions are influencing (Ylikoski 1999,

156). Consequently customer satisfaction surveys have four main objectives. The objectives are to find out the essential things that influence the customer satisfaction, to measure the current level of customer satisfaction, to produce suggestions how to develop the satisfaction and to follow the development of customer satisfaction after the corrective actions have been done. In order to really keep the customer satisfaction developing it is vital that some sort of measurement is done regularly to see how the corrective actions if needed have influenced.

### 3.1 The concept of customer satisfaction survey

Customer satisfaction survey is marketing a research that focuses on to the company's contact surface where the aim is to find out the level of the satisfaction that the customers experience towards the company's operations (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 83).

Customer satisfaction survey is a marketing research so the normal principles of implementation apply also to customer satisfaction survey. This means that the usual criteria that apply to research's functioning are also fulfilled. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 83.)

The criteria are:

1. *Validity*, which means that customer satisfaction survey measures exactly the things that are connected to the satisfaction that the survey is trying to find out.
2. *Reliability*, which means the stability and dependability of the outcomes of the research. This becomes concrete if the customer survey is repeated and the outcomes of the survey are effectively the same than they were in the previous survey assuming that there has been no change in the customer satisfaction.
3. *Systematic approach*, which means in the customer satisfaction surveys amongst other things that research should be conducted systematically so that the development of customer satisfaction can be followed in a time period and compare the satisfaction outcomes e.g. between different offices.
4. *Producing extra value*, which becomes true when the customer satisfaction survey is done so that with the help of it the internal operations and marketing can be developed to deepen customer relationships.
5. *Automatic engagement to the operations*, which means that customer satisfaction survey should be such that the outcomes received by it will automatically produce impulses to the operations and development decisions. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 83-84.)

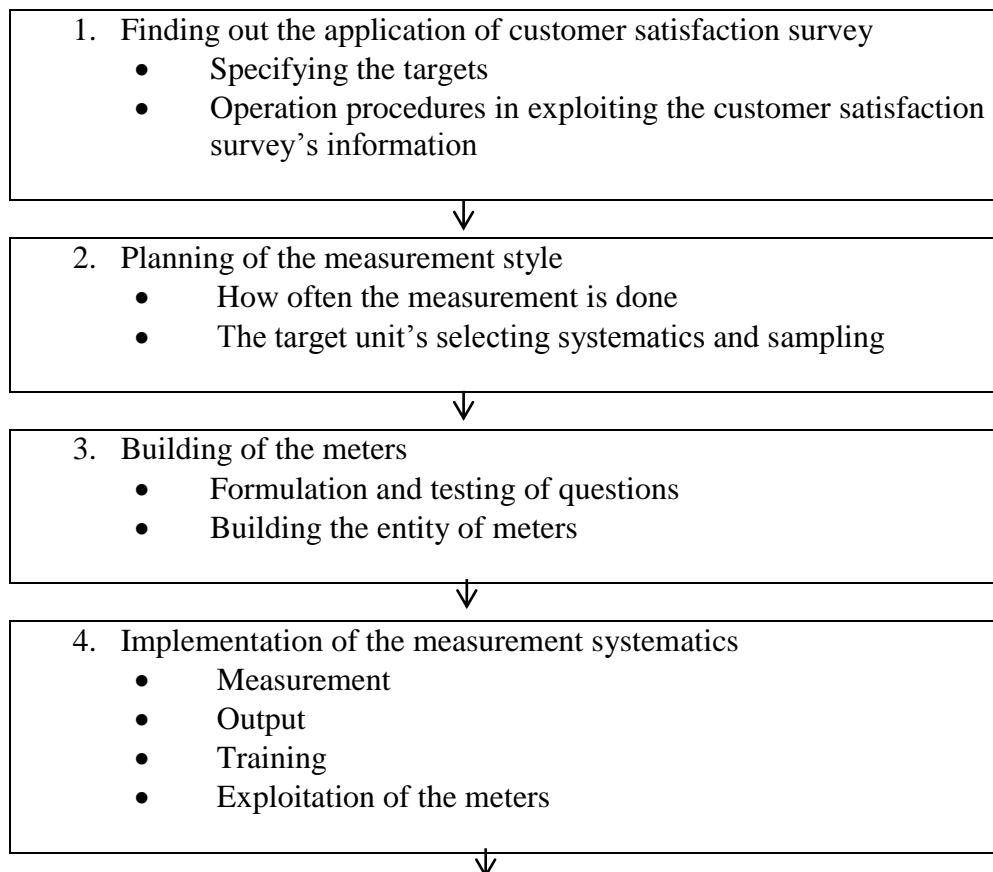
Sometimes customer satisfaction surveys and company image research are considered to be one and the same thing by mistake. But that is not the

case because there are differences between the two types of researches that cannot be passed. Company's image research finds out the image (the anticipated expectations) in the company's operations, the customer satisfaction research measures the customers' satisfaction experiences in the company's operations (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 84). In the customer satisfaction survey all the factors that are connected to the satisfaction must be included into the research and nothing else because the idea is to measure only the level of satisfaction. That is why questions about the company's image cannot be involved in the same questioning and in fact those matters should be asked in a totally separate questioning.

### 3.2 The customer satisfaction survey's implementation process

Customer satisfaction measurement is all about continuity and systematic measurement. Without finding out the customer feedback regularly about the customer's experiences in the contact situations the real development and the level of the satisfaction is impossible to see.

Rope (2005, 578) describes the detection equipment of customer satisfaction and how they are built in sequence as follows:



- |  |
|--|
| <p>5. From measurement to management and marketing systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development follow-up</li><li>• Development actions</li><li>• Marketing actions</li></ul> |
|--|

Figure 4 Customer satisfaction measurement's implementation phasing (Rope 2005, 558)

Figure 4 shows how the detection equipment of customer satisfaction proceeds from in phases beginning with finding out the application of customer satisfaction survey and ending to operational actions like development's follow-up and development actions. With the help of this figure the company can ensure that all the phases and matters that belong to a properly executed customer satisfaction survey are fulfilled.

According to Rope (2005, 578) building the detection equipment of customer satisfaction and phasing of the implementation follows always the pattern of the previous figure so that the ground is all the applications to which the customers' satisfaction information is intended to use. The writer continues that the applications dictate directly the requirements of what kind of information, how widely, with what sample and how specifically the information is to be collected from the customers.

### 3.3 The selection of the research method

The method that was used in the customer satisfaction survey for the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education was quantitative method or quantitative research. The quantitative method has origin from the natural sciences and it is fairly often used research method in the field of social sciences. In this information theory such laws that are universal and describe the laws between cause and consequences are emphasized. Behind the quantitative method is also a thought that reality is based on facts that can be objectively discovered. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 1997, 139.)

#### 3.3.1 Validity and reliability

Validity means that customer satisfaction survey measures exactly the things that are connected to the satisfaction that the survey is trying to find out. The influencing things in the validity centrally are formation of research questions, the alternatives (scales) chosen to the questions and the placing of the questions in the question form. If the customer satisfaction survey is done as interviewing research the leading influence of the interviewer can weaken the validity. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 83.) In the customer satisfaction survey for the customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education the validity was ensured with selecting carefully the right target group for the survey, reform-

ing the questions so that the questions are concentrated on the matter at hand which was customer satisfaction. The survey was done with the help of an Internet based program and not by interviewing so there was not weakening influence of the interviewer.

Reliability means the stability and dependability of the outcomes of the research. This becomes concrete if the customer survey is repeated and the outcomes of the survey are effectively the same than they were in the previous survey assuming that there has been no change in the customer satisfaction. The things that weaken the reliability are etc. too small sample size, the amount of non-responses is great, the questions are unclearly formulated or the research is timed wrongly which weakens the customers' ability to focus on to the questions and answering to them with a thought. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 83.) The reliability in the customer satisfaction survey for the customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education was secured so that the questions were formulated to be clear and easy to understand. Also emphasis was put on to the size of the sample by ensuring that the sample was great enough and the amount of responses would be enough to make accurate conclusion about the level of customer satisfaction. So the objective in the research was to get at least 50 answers from the customer of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education to ensure the reliability factor.

### 3.4 The target group of the research and size of the sample

The target group for the research was chosen to be the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education that had participated to a continuing education course in the spring of 2012. The target group had customers who had participated to a seminars that only last from one day to four days and also customers whose course had started in the fall of 2011 but ended at end of the spring 2012.

The target group consists of men and women although the amount of women in the course is always much greater than men. The age distribution of the target group was between the ages of 18 to over 60 years old. The professional background of the target customers varied. But common thing for the respondents were that they all worked in field of Social and Health sector.

### 3.5 Compilation of the questioning form

The question form was built up from three different sectors. In the first sector the questions clarified the background variables of the respondents. All together there were three questions in this sector that concerned to the sex and age of the respondent. The last question was to find out whether the respondent participated to the Continuing Education course so that the course fee was paid by the person self, the employee or some other financier such as Office of Apprenticeship.



The second sector of the question form had questions that concerned the quality of all the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. The first questions handled the effectiveness and quality of marketing separating the different marketing channels. Secondly the service quality of personnel was asked and the level of service in the actual course days and seminars. There were also questions about the fluency and convenience of actions during the course or seminar days such as directions to the class room at the site or the appropriateness of the class rooms for the course or seminar day.

The questions in the third sector of the form handled the overall image of the of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education and what were the reasons why a customer had chosen just that course or seminar. There was also a question which asked the customers what other educational organizations they may have used before. Then the customers were asked to compare their experiences from the organization compared to other educational organizations and their services if the customer had experiences elsewhere. The last question in the question form was an open question where the customers were asked to give ideas to improve the service from their own perspective.

The main part of the question form was built up with structured or multiple choice questions. The amount of answering alternatives was 5 from which the respondent chose one which was the most suitable alternative. The scale for those 5 alternatives e.g. was when asking how good the overall quality of service the organization was completely unsuccessful, quite unsuccessful, cannot say or do not have an opinion, successful and completely successful. In the end of the question form there were also few structured question which had 4 answering alternatives to choose from. An example from those questions is e.g. that is the customer willing to use the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education in the future. Then the alternatives were yes, maybe, no and cannot say or do not have an opinion. In the middle and in the end of the question form there were also few open ended questions when the respondents were e.g. asked how to develop the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. Altogether there were 15 questions if the question form and the form had been built up so that all the questions were mandatory to answer expect the open ended questions where the respondent could write their answer or opinion in their own words.

### 3.6 The execution of the enquiry

The enquiry was done with an Internet based query program Webropol and then sent to customers by E-mail as a link in the message to the query with also accompanying letter attached to email. The accompanying letter introduced the maker of the query and explained the reasons and the objectives of the query. The contact information of the maker was also attached to the letter if the respondents had any questions about the query.

The E-mail addresses were got from the enrolment program ASIO used in the HAMK Continuing Education. The enquiry was conducted between the dates 28.3.-17.4.2012. First the time to answer to the query was two weeks but after the answering period the amount of respondent was poor so the answering time was continued one week further and the target group was sent another E-mail to remind them about the query.

The question form had no questions related to the identity of the respondent and the respondents could send it directly to the maker via Webropol without any intermediary which ensured the reliability and anonymity of the answers.

The answers were analysed with the help of Microsoft Excel program and formulated to figures so the results could be easily seen and understood by the reader. Conclusions about the customer satisfaction were drawn from the figures based on answers and also the results were written open in order to understand the answers more deeply.

## 4 THE ANALYZIS OF THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

### 4.1 The background variables

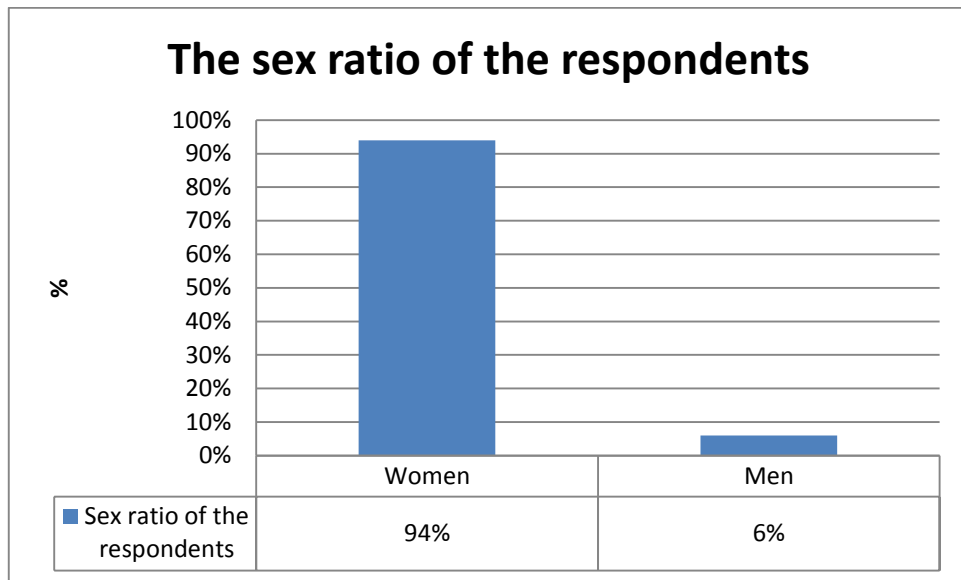


Figure 5 The sex ratio of the respondents

The first question in the customer satisfaction survey clarified the sex ratio of the respondents (Figure 5). The survey was answered all together 68 (94%) women and 4 (6%) men. Most of the respondents in this case were women. From these figures can be seen that the most of the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education are women but that can be explained by the fact that Social and Health sector is women dominated field so also the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education consist of women.

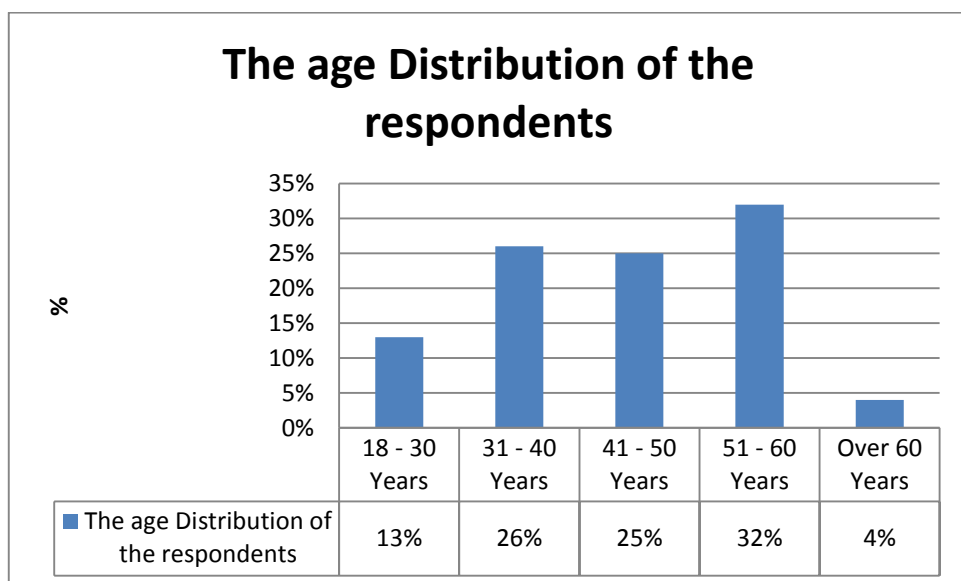


Figure 6 The age distribution of the respondents

The question number two was about the age distribution of the respondents. The figure 6 shows that the age distribution of the respondents were asked with the scale of customers between the age of 18-30 years, customers between 31-40 years, customers between 41-50 years, customers between 51-60 years and customers over 60 years (Figure 6). The greatest percentage of respondents with this scale was the customers between 51-60 years which was 32% (23 persons) from the total amount of the responses. The next greatest group of respondents consists of customers between the ages of 31-40 years which was 26% (19 persons) from the total amount of responses. The third largest group of respondents was the customers between the ages of 41-50 years. In this group the amount of respondents was 25% (18 persons) from the total amount of responses. The customers between the ages of 18-30 years were the last but one group of respondents. In this group the total amount of responses was 13% (9 persons). The smallest group of customers was the customers with the age of over 60 years. In this group the amount of responses was 4% (3 persons). From these figures a conclusion can be drawn that the most of the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education are the ones between the ages of 31-60 years old. That age group is also most likely to be actively involved in the working live so the need for continuing education is also greater with this age group. The low percentage of respondents of the two extremes of customers between the ages of 18-30 years and customers over 60 years can be explained by different facts. For example young people can be still in vocational training and have not yet entered the working life or they are about to start raising a family at home so the need for continuing education courses is low. The customer group with the age of over 60 years on the other hand can be low because of the fact that some people over 60 years are already retired from the working life or they are about to do so and do not consider themselves to be in the need for continuing education at that stage of their careers.

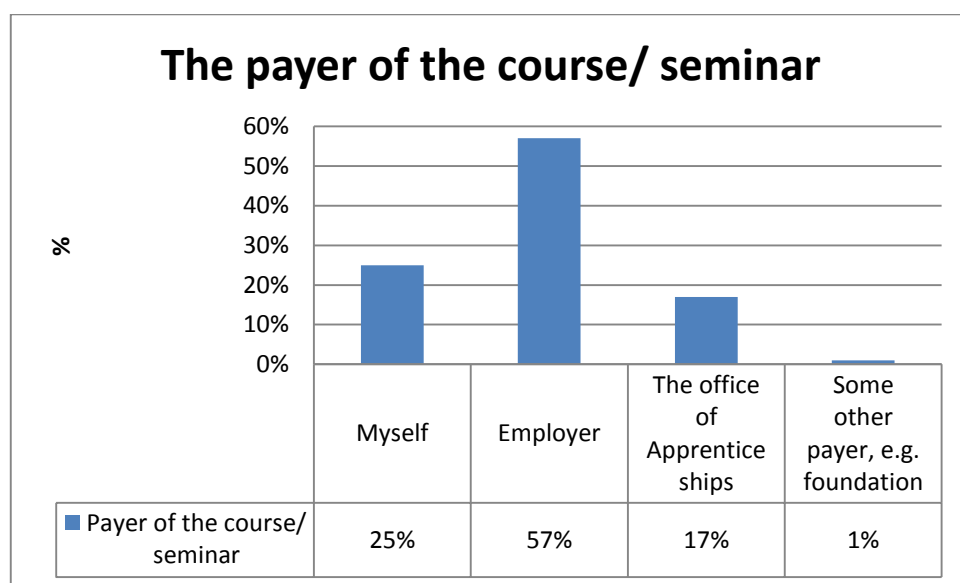


Figure 7 The payer of the course/ seminar

The third question clarified the payer of the course or a seminar (Figure 7). The largest group of participants was the group of customers whose em-

ployer paid the course fee 57% (41 persons). The second largest group of customers was the ones who paid the course fee themselves 25% (18 persons). The next largest group of customers were taking part to the course by the funding of The Office of Apprenticeships 17% (12 persons). And the smallest customer group consists of participants with some other payer, e.g. foundation 1% (1 person). These figures demonstrate that most of the customers that participate to the courses of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education have had an outside funding e.g. employer 57% from the responses or The Office of Apprenticeships 17% from the responses. These figures were interesting also because the amount of customers that have had the motivation to participate to our courses although they have had to pay the course fee themselves 25% is the second largest group of participants. If the customers have paid the course fee by themselves they are often the most motivated customers. If the employer or the Office of Apprenticeships has paid the course fee the person taking part to the course may be participating because the employer wants that and not by own free will. On the other hand that group of people often has the support of their employer to participate. That can mean for example time to do the course assignments on working hours which means that studying is easier for them. Customers that pay they course fee by themselves often have to find the time to study outside working hours. That makes the studying much harder for them when planning time management not forgetting the fact that a course can be very expensive for a private person to pay.

### 4.2 The questions about the level of customer satisfaction

The next part of the survey concentrated on to the level of the actual satisfaction of the customers to the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. The questions handled things like marketing of the courses, customer satisfaction related e.g. to the friendliness of the staff or the fluency of the course days. Questions 4-6 and 8-14 were multiple choice questions and questions 7 and 15 were open ended questions where the customers could answer with their own words. The analysis to the open questions is presented in the final part of this chapter.

The question 4 asked the customers how satisfied they were to different marketing methods of the courses of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education and some information about the Websites. The sub-questions were how satisfied the customers were to marketing of the courses or seminars by newspaper ads, marketing by E-mail, marketing by the Website of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. The second to one sub-question asked how satisfied the customers were to the functionality and clarity of the Websites. The last sub-question asked the customers' satisfaction towards the Websites being up-to-date. The answering scale in the following questions was 1= Failed completely, 2= Failed fairly, 3= Cannot say, 4= Successful, 5= Successful completely.

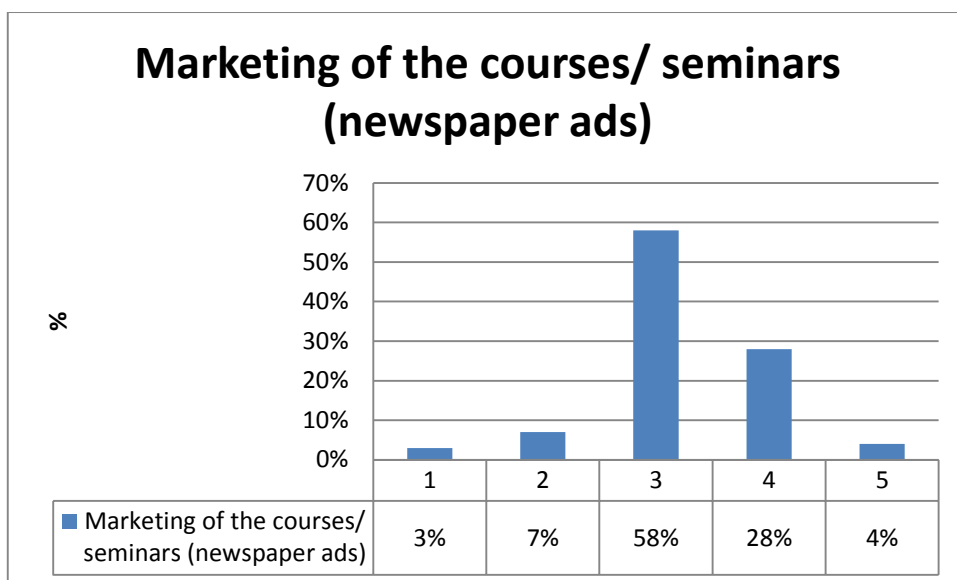


Figure 8 Marketing of the courses/ seminars (newspaper ads)

The figure 8 demonstrates that 58% (42 persons) cannot say whether or not they were satisfied or not to the marketing by newspaper ads. To the same questions 28% (20 persons) thought that the marketing by ads has been successful and 4% (3 persons) were most satisfied to the marketing by ads. Respondents that were not that satisfied to the marketing by ads gave the grade 2 (Failed fairly) 7% (5 persons) or the grade 1 (Failed completely). Altogether a conclusion can be drawn that the amount of satisfied customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education is higher than the amount of disappointed customers.

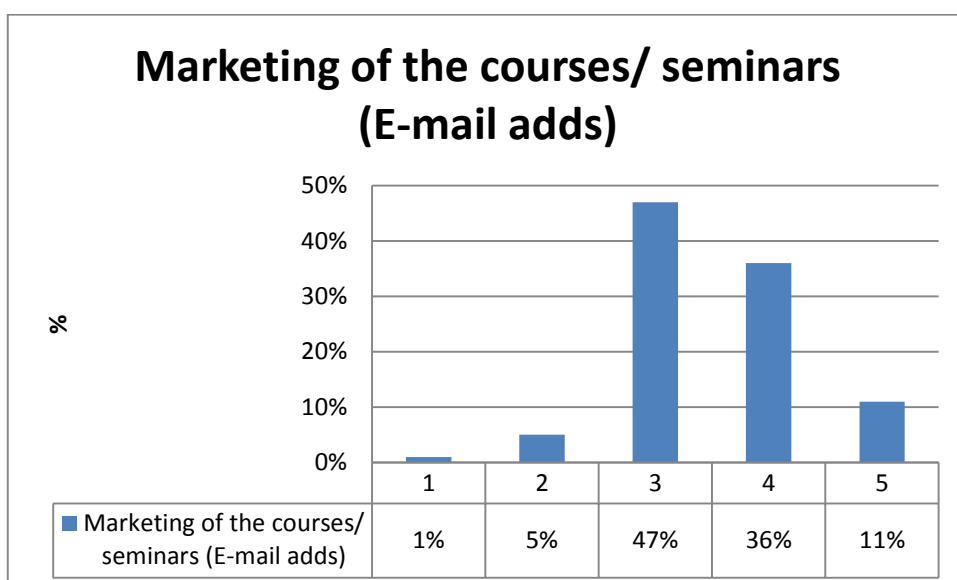


Figure 9 Marketing of the courses/ seminars (E-mail adds)

Figure 9 involves the answers towards marketing by E-mail ads. Again most of the respondents 47% (34 persons) could not say whether or not they were satisfied to the marketing by E-mail ads. The next largest group

of customers 36% (26 persons) thought the marketing this way had been successful and 11% (8 persons) answered that the marketing had been successful completely. Again as it was in the question before the amount of disappointed customers is lower than satisfied customers to the situation as 5% (3 persons) had the opinion that the marketing by E-mail had failed fairly (grade 2) and 1% (1 person) thought that the grade to this question was 1 (failed completely).

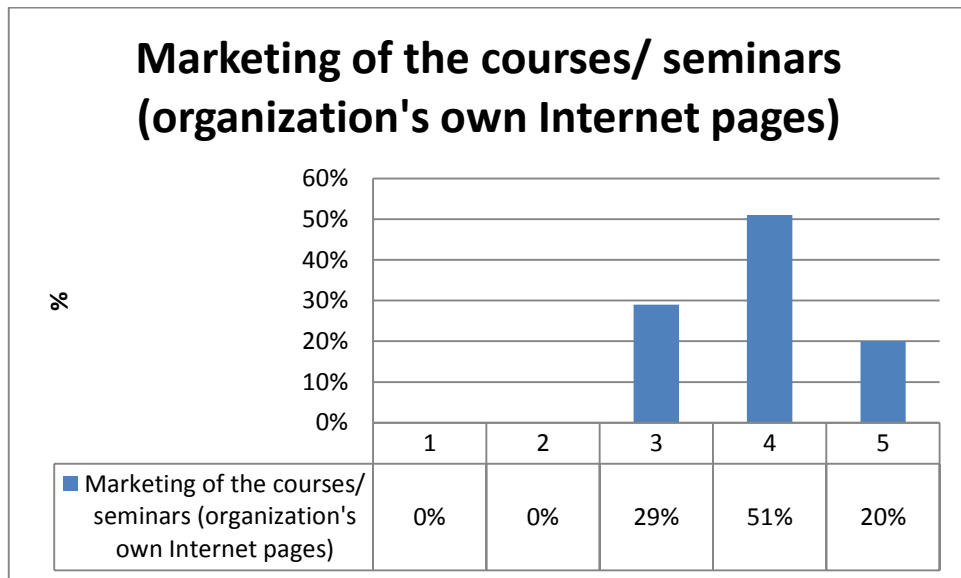


Figure 10 Marketing of the courses/ seminars (organization's own Internet pages)

Figure 10 describes the customers' satisfaction towards the marketing of courses and seminars by the organization's own Internet pages. Most of the customers were satisfied to the marketing this way as 51% (36 persons) gave the grade 4 (Successful) and 20% (14 persons) thought the marketing had been completely successful. Some amount of answers were again without a clear opinion as 29% (20 persons) gave the grade 3 (Cannot say) as an answer. Interestingly there were no customers at all who had the idea that marketing by organization's own Internet pages had been disappointing to them because the two lowest grades had answers.

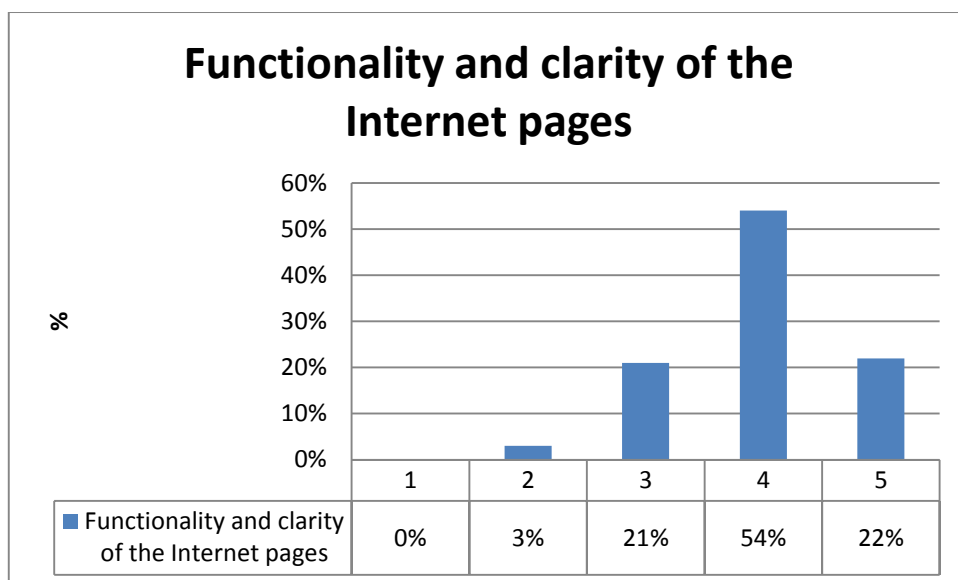


Figure 11 Functionality and clarity of the Internet pages

Customers were also asked how functional and clear they thought the Internet pages of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education were (Figure 11). The largest amount of respondents 54% (39 persons) thought that the Internet pages had the grade 4 (Successful) and 22% (16 persons) were the most satisfied. Some customers had no clear opinion 21% (persons) and their answer to this question was grade 3 (Cannot say). Two persons (3%) from the respondents were not so satisfied with the Internet pages and gave the second to lowest grade 2 (failed fairly).

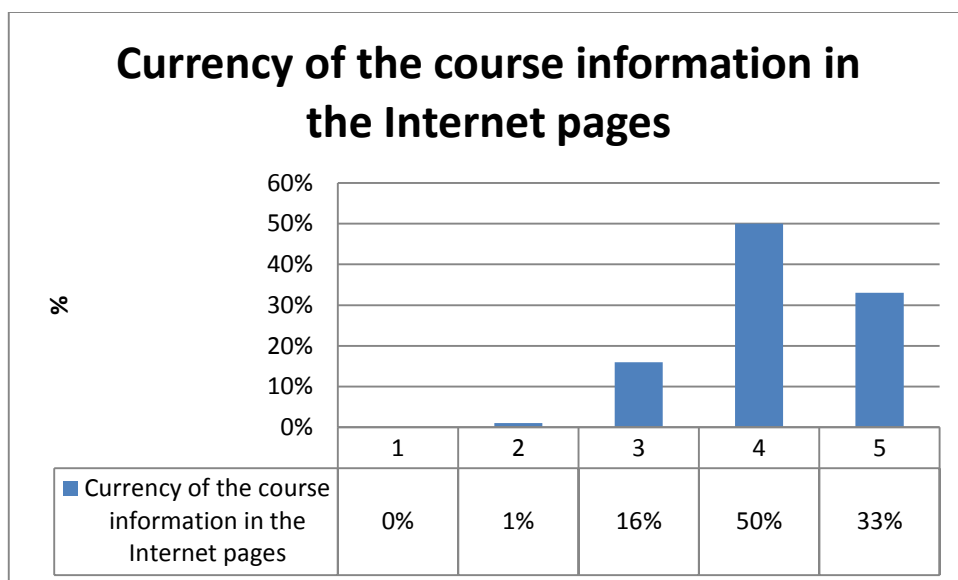


Figure 12 Currency of the course information in the Internet pages

Figure 12 clarifies what the customers thought about the currency of the course information in the Internet pages. Half of the respondents 50% (36 Persons) had the opinion that the currency of the course information deserved the next best grade. The best grade to this question was given by 33% (24 persons). Again the amount of customers that had no clear opin-



ion to this question was fairly big as 16% (11 persons) gave the middle grade 3 (Cannot say) as their answer. Only 1% (1 person) thought that the course information could have been more current as the grade given was 2 (Failed fairly).

The question 5 asked the customers how satisfied they were towards the operations of the personnel. The sub-questions were the satisfaction level to the overall customer service, the friendliness of the personnel, the expertise and professional skills of the personnel, accessibility of the personnel by E-mail, accessibility of the personnel by phone and the level of service of the personnel during the course/ seminar days. The answering scale in the following questions was 1= Failed completely, 2= Failed fairly, 3= Cannot say, 4= Successful, 5= Successful completely.

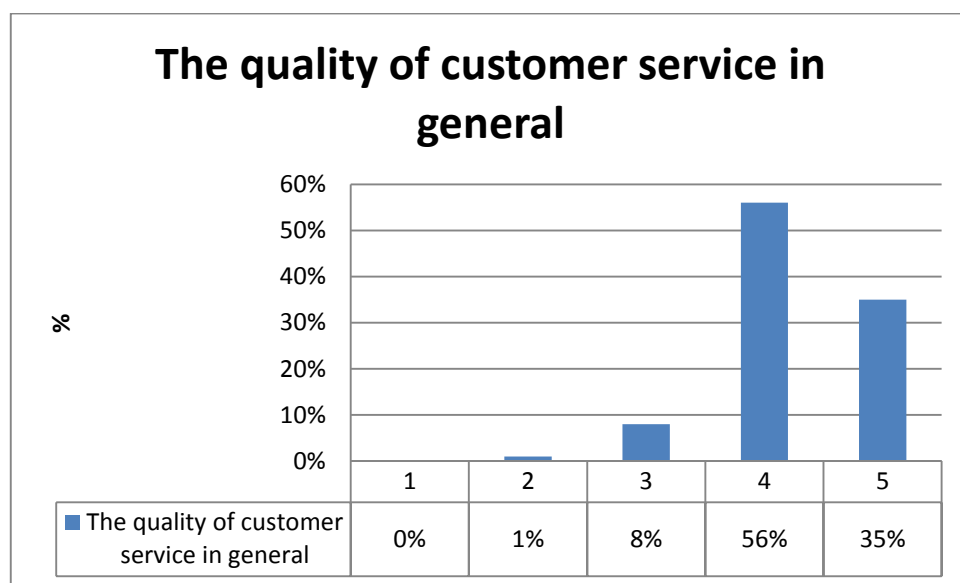


Figure 13 The quality of the customer service in general

As figure 13 shows almost all the customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education were somewhat or really satisfied to the quality of the customer service in general. Little over half of the respondents 56% (40 persons) thought that the quality of customer service in general was successful and 35% (25 persons) gave the best grade 5 (Successful completely) to this question. Only 8% (6 persons) had no clear opinion and 1% (1 person) thought that there were some improvements that could be done as the grade given was 2 (Failed fairly).

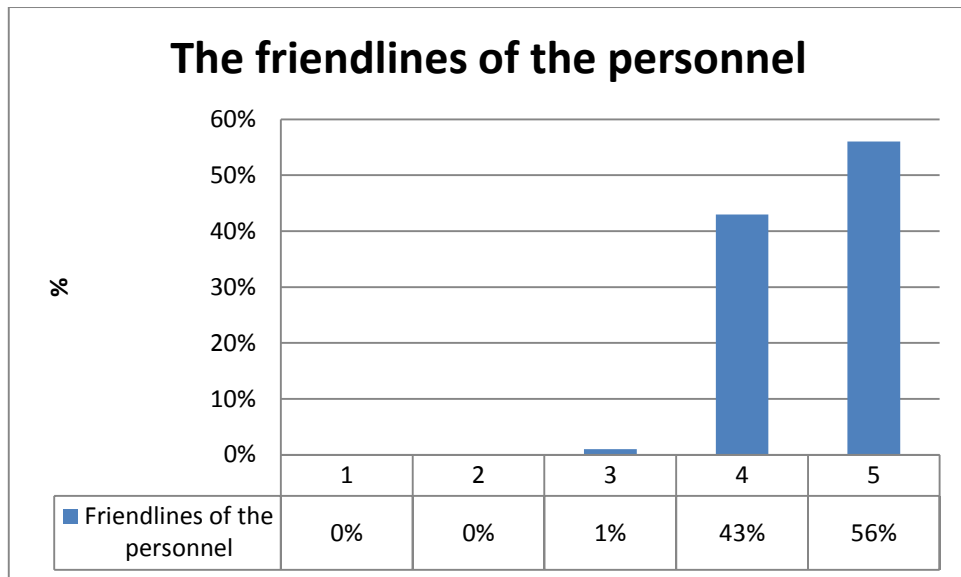


Figure 14 The friendliness of the personnel

Almost all the customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education thought (Figure 14) that the friendliness of the personnel had been good or very good. Little over half of the respondents 56% (40 persons) gave the best grade 5 (Successful completely) to this question. The amount of 43% (31 persons) had the next best opinion (Successful) to the same question. Compared to previous questions the amount of customers that could not give a clear opinion to the question at hand this question was an exception as only one respondent (1%) gave the middle grade 3 (Cannot say). Both the grades 1 and 2 had no responses.

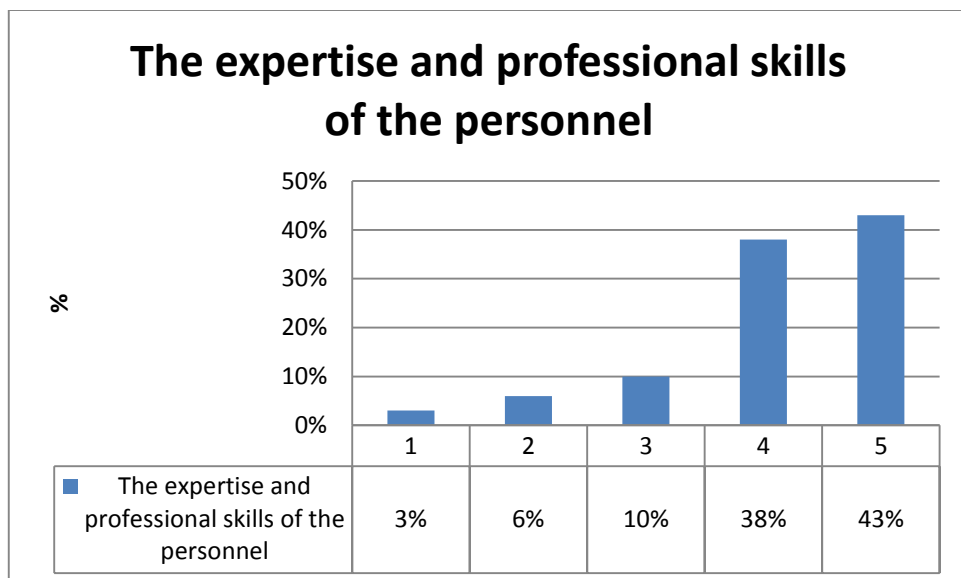


Figure 15 The expertise and professional skills of the personnel

Figure 15 illustrates what the customers thought about the expertise and professional skills of the personnel. The largest amount of responses was given to the grade 5 (Successful completely) as 43% (32 persons) had that opinion to the question. The grade 4 (Successful) was given by 38% (27 persons). Again some respondents 10% (7 persons) had no clear opinion

about the matter. And all together every tenth customer were not so satisfied with the expertise and professional skills of the personnel as 6% (4 persons) gave the grade 2 (Failed fairly) and 3% (2 persons) gave the grade 1 (Failed completely) to the question.

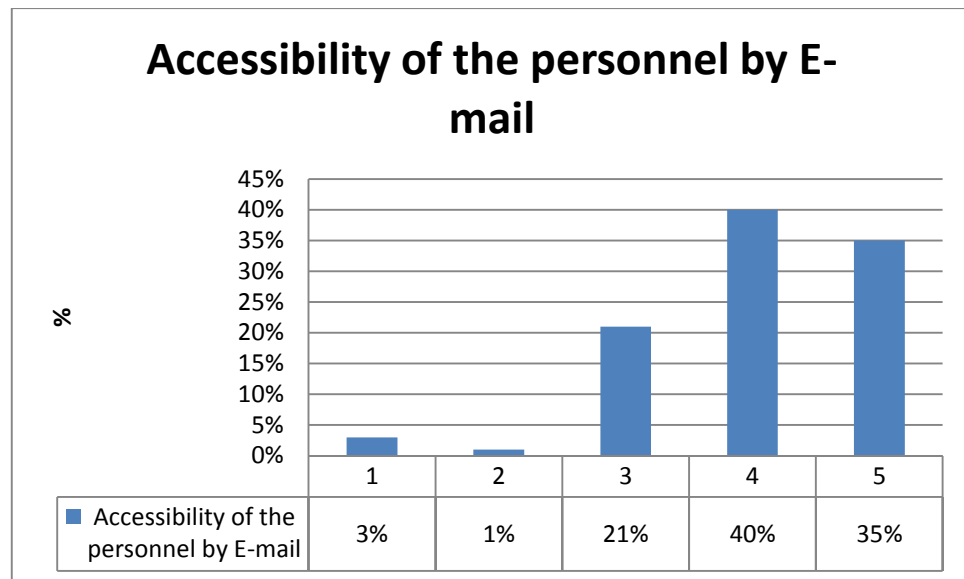


Figure 16 Accessibility of the personnel by E-mail

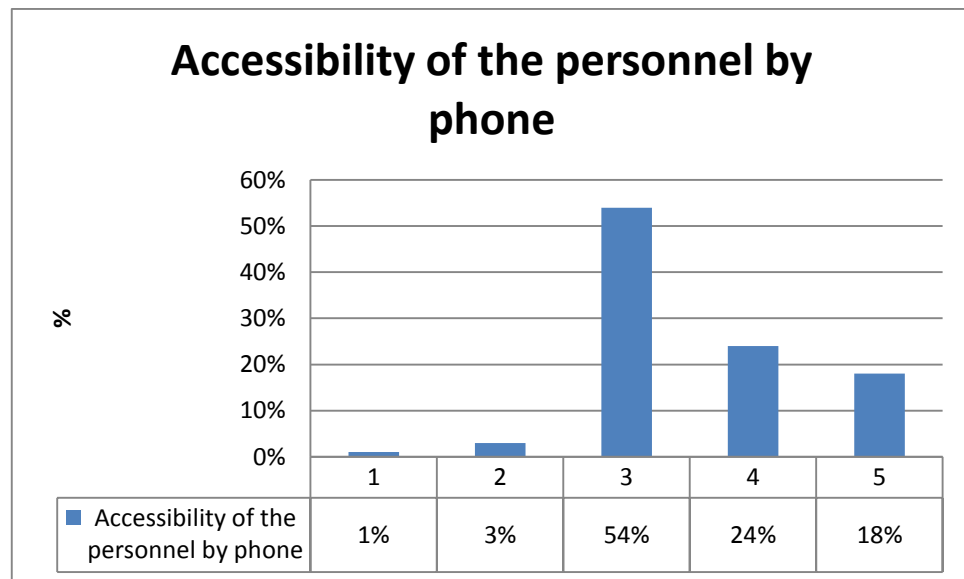


Figure 17 Accessibility of the personnel by phone

Figures 16 and 17 demonstrate what the level of accessibility of the personnel by E-mail and phone was. All together the customers thought that the accessibility of the personnel was better by E-mail than it was by phone. Most of the customers 40% (29 persons) were somewhat satisfied to the accessibility by E-mail as they gave the grade 4 (Successful) whereas the same grade got only 24% (17 persons) from the accessibility by phone. Little over one third 35% (25 persons) were very satisfied to the accessibility by E-mail as they gave the best grade 5 (Successful completely). But only 18% (13 persons) thought the same from the accessibility by phone. Little over half of the customers (54% 38 persons) had no

clear opinion about the accessibility by phone as the grade given was 3 (Cannot say). The same grade was only given 21% (15 persons) in the question of personnel's accessibility by phone. Again some customers were not so satisfied with the accessibility of the personnel by E-mail or by phone. The grade 2 (Failed fairly) got one answer (1%) from the E-mail part and two answers (3%) from the phone part. The grade 1 (Failed completely) got the opposite figures as two persons (3%) gave the lowest grade to the E-mail part and 1 person (1%) thought the same about the phone part.

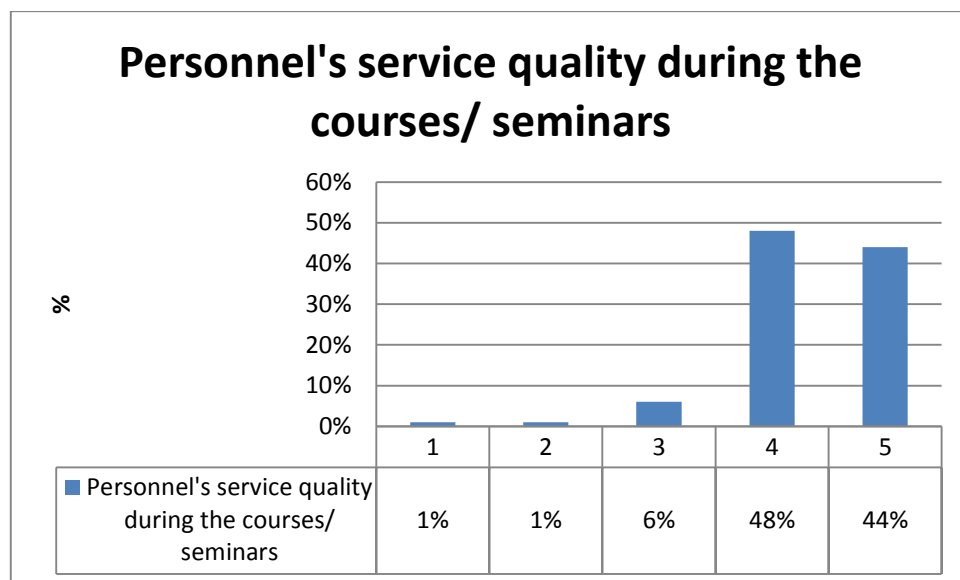


Figure 18 Personnel's service quality during the courses/ seminars

Figure 18 demonstrates the personnel's service quality during the courses and seminars. Almost half of the customers 48% (34 persons) had the opinion that the quality had been successful. The best grade 5 (Successful completely) was given to the quality in this question by 44% (31 persons). The amount of customers with no clear opinion was 6% (4persons). But only two persons altogether thought that there could be some improvements to be done to the service quality. Both grades 1 (Failed completely) and 2 (Failed fairly) got 1% (1 person) from the responses.

The question 6 handled the enrolment process to courses and seminars and how satisfied the customers were to that. The sub-questions were how satisfied the customers were towards the Internet based enrolment and what they felt about letter of invitation to courses and seminars coming by E-mail. The answering scale in the following questions was 1= Failed completely, 2= Failed fairly, 3= Cannot say, 4= Successful, 5= Successful completely.

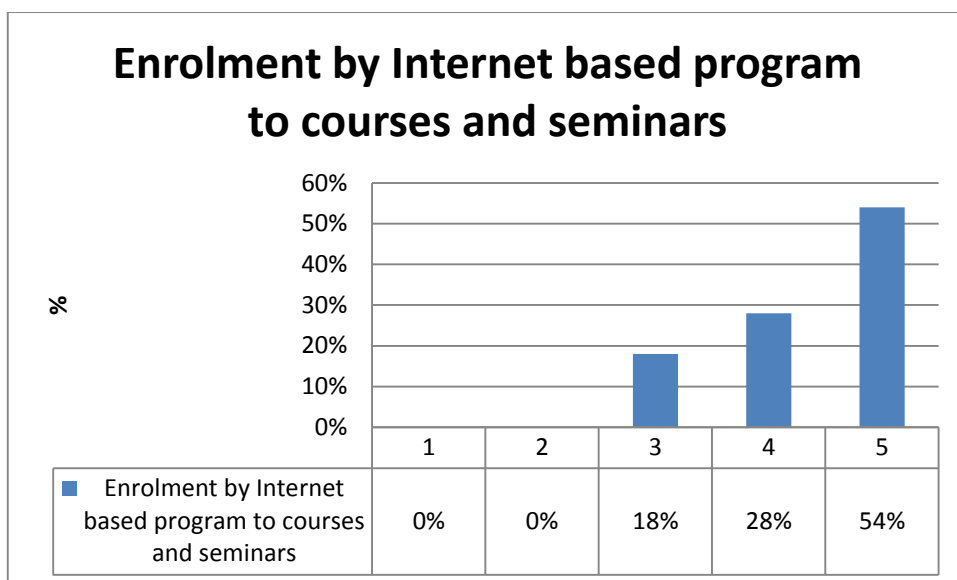


Figure 19 Enrolment by Internet based program to courses and seminars

Figure 19 demonstrates the customer satisfaction towards the enrolment process to courses and seminars. Little over half of the customers were very satisfied to the enrolment by Internet based program as 54% (39 persons) gave the highest grade 5 (Successful completely). The next best grade 4 (Successful) was give 28% (20 persons). Without any clear opinion about the matter was 18% (13 persons) but no answers were given to the lowest grades at all.

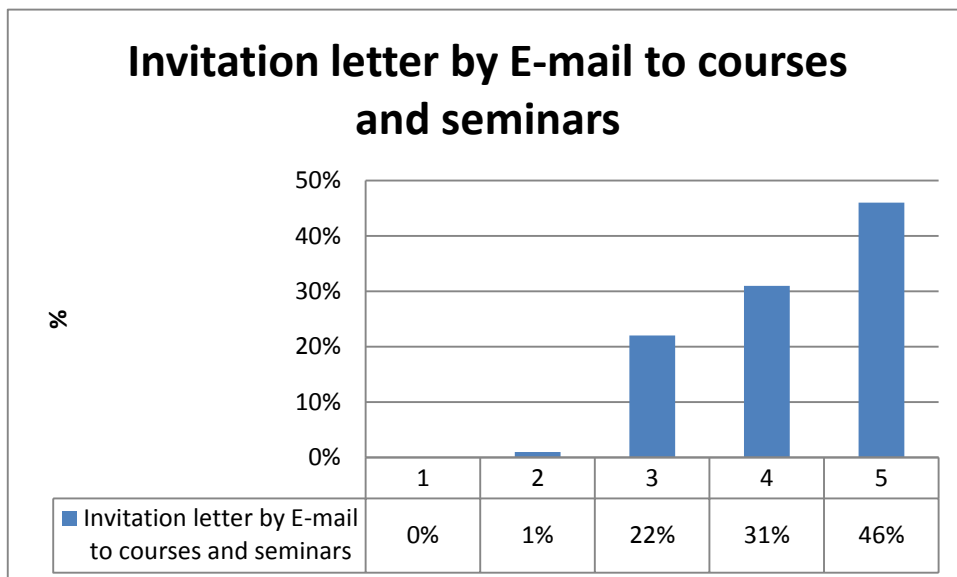


Figure 20 Invitation letter by E-mail to courses and seminars

Customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education were also asked their satisfaction towards the E-mail based invitation letter (Figure 20). Most of the customers 46% (33 persons) thought that the invitation this way deserved the best 5 (Successful completely) Also 31% (22 persons) had positive opinion as they gave the 4 (Successful). There were also customers (22% 16 persons) with no

clear opinion as the grade given was 3 (Cannot say). Only one person (1%) gave a negative feedback as the grade given was 2 (Failed fairly).

The question 8 clarified the customer satisfaction towards the actual course and seminar days. The sub-questions were what was the level of satisfaction to the currency and clarity of information in the invitation letter, directions and signs during the course and seminar days, the general fluency of course arrangements and the appropriateness of facilities and classrooms. The answering scale in the following questions was 1= Failed completely, 2= Failed fairly, 3= Cannot say, 4= Successful, 5= Successful completely.

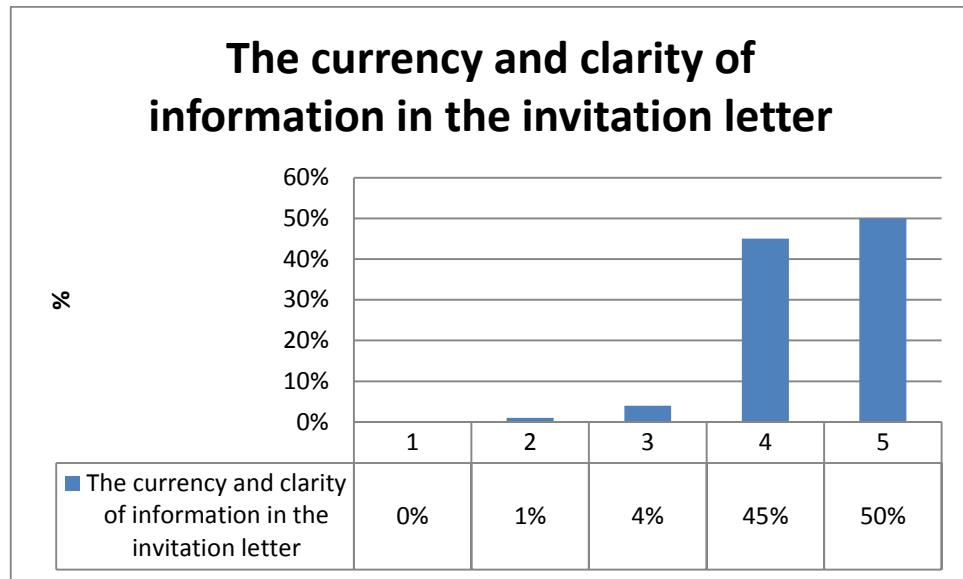


Figure 21 The currency and clarity of information in the invitation letter

Accurately 50% (36 persons) from the respondents thought that the currency and clarity of information in the invitation letter was very good (Figure 21). To the same question 45% (32 persons) gave the grade 4 (Successful). Without any clear opinion were 4% (3persons). The next lowest grade 2 (Failed fairly) was given by only one person (1%) from the respondents.

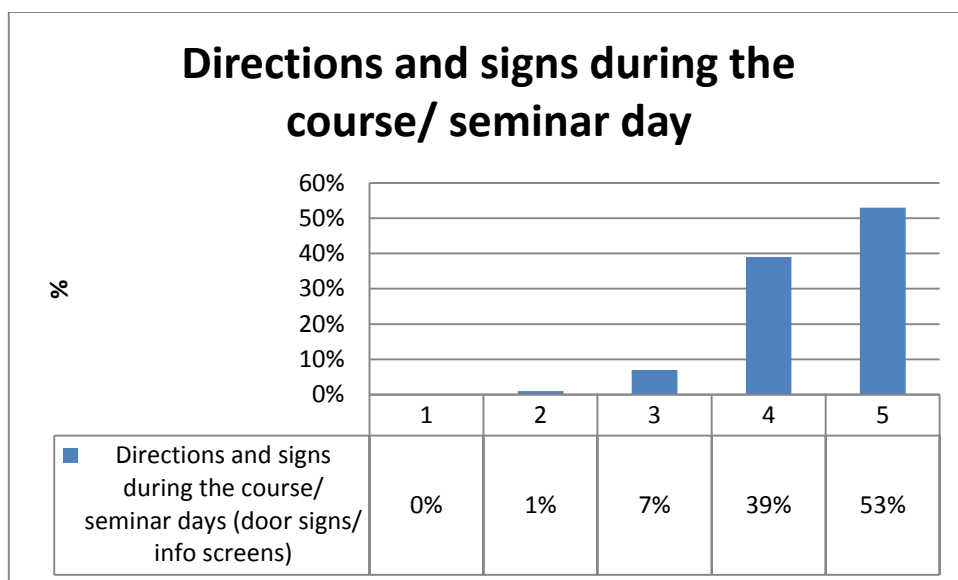


Figure 22 Directions and signs during the course/ seminar day

Figure 22 demonstrates how satisfied the customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education were to the directions and signs during the course/ seminar days meaning the signs on doors and info screens. Little over half of the respondents 53% (38 persons) were the most satisfied with the directions during the course days. The grade 4 (Successful) was given by 39% (28 persons). Five persons (7%) could not really say whether or not they were satisfied or not to the matter. And again one person (1%) from the respondents gave the next lowest grade 2 (Failed fairly) to the question.

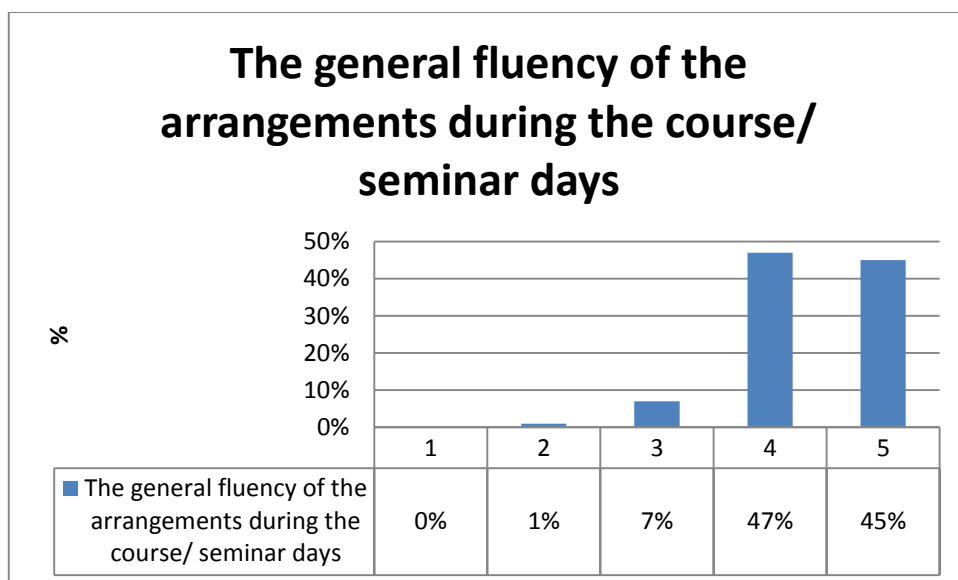


Figure 23 The general fluency of the arrangements during the course/ seminar days

As figure 23 shows little over 90% of the customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education were somewhat or really satisfied with the arrangements during the course and seminar days. This can be seen as 47% (34 persons) thought the arrangements had been successful and 45% (32 persons) thought the arrangements had

been completely successful. Five persons (7%) gave the middle grade 3 (Cannot say) and one person (1%) had the opinion that some improvements could be done as the grade given was 2 (Failed fairly).

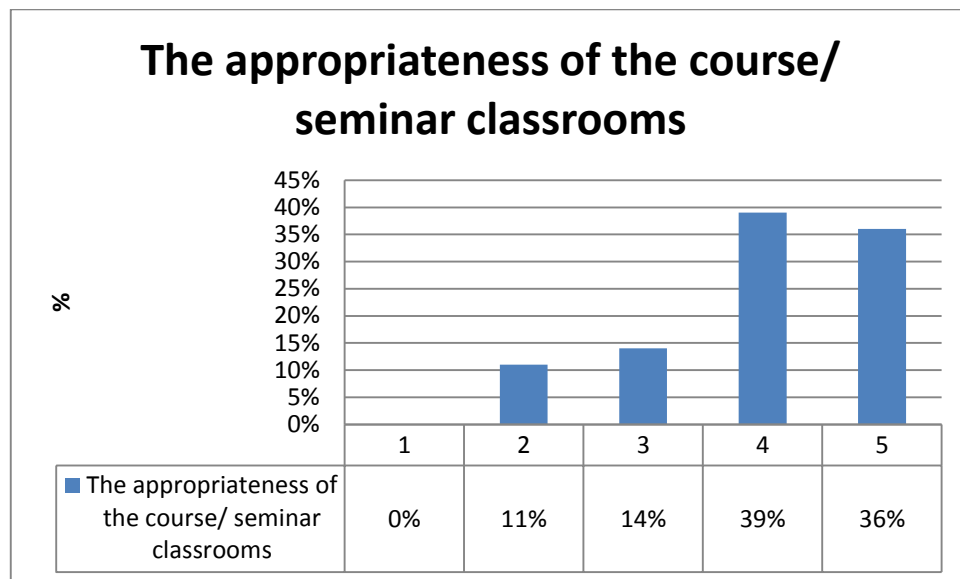


Figure 24 The appropriateness of the course/ seminar classrooms

Figure 24 demonstrates what the customers of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education thought of the appropriateness of the course and seminar classrooms. The next best grade 4 (Successful) was given by 39% (28 persons) and the best grade 5 got the amount of 36% (26 persons) answers. Again there were customers (14% 10 persons) that could not really say whether or not the classrooms had been suitable. In this case the amount of disappointed customers were higher than many of the previous questions as the grade 2 (Failed fairly) was given 11% (8 persons) answers.

#### 4.3 The matters that influenced to the choice of academy

The next chapter illustrates the reasons that had influenced the customers' choice of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education (question 9). The customers were asked to grade how much the following factors had been influencing their choice. The influencing factors given were the specialization HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education for trainings in the field of Social and Health sector, the expertise of the lecturers, corresponding education was not arranged anywhere else, regional reasons, the course site was near the person's residence, the price-quality ratio was good in the courses/seminars, previous experiences from the organization, the quality level and functionality of service, the employer's recommendation from the organization/ course in question and visibility of marketing. . The answering scale in the following questions was 1= Had no influence, 2= Hardly had any influence, 3= Cannot say, 4= Had little influence, 5= Influenced a lot.



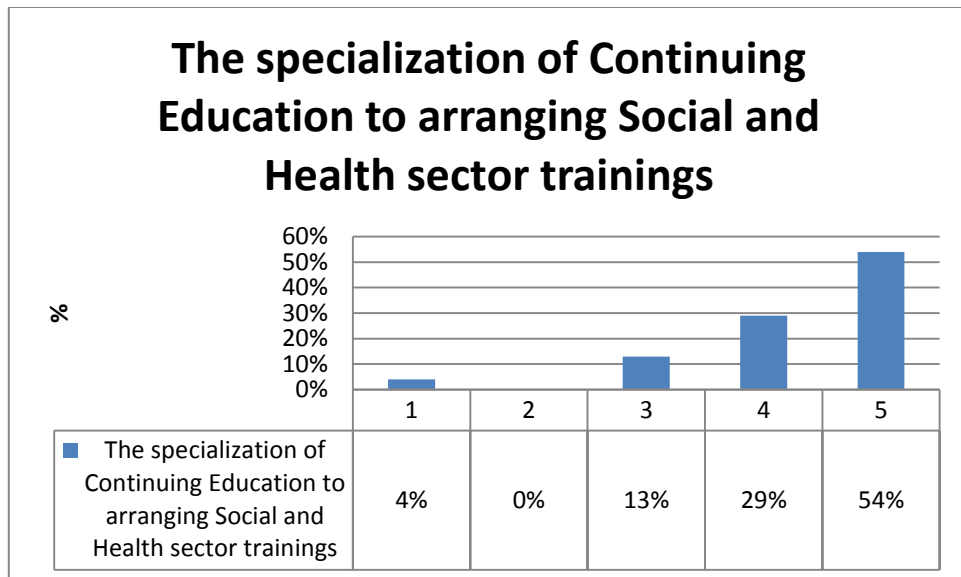


Figure 25 The specialization of Continuing Education to arranging Social and Health sector trainings

As figure 25 shows the most influencing factor why customers had chosen HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education has been the specialization to arranging Social and Health sector trainings. The amount of 38 respondents (54%) thought that this fact influenced a lot to their choice. To the same question 29% (20 persons) said that the fact influenced a little to their choice. Nine persons (13%) could not really say if the matter had an influencing role or not. And 4% (3 persons) stated that the specialization had no influence at all.

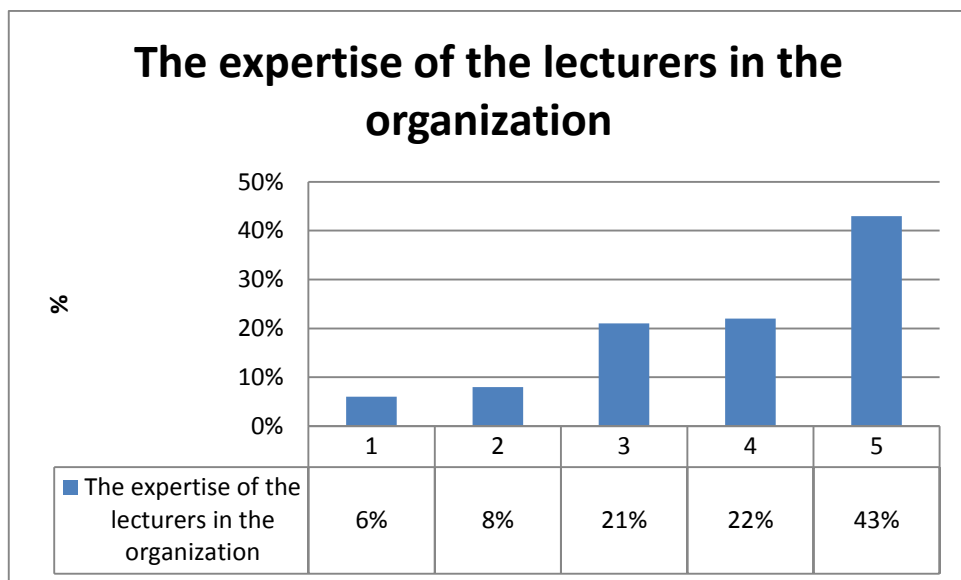


Figure 26 The expertise of the lecturers in the organization

The figure 26 shows that the expertise of the lectures has had an important role to the customers' choice. The largest amount of answers was given to the grade 5 (Influenced a lot) as 43% (31 persons) thought so. Respondents who stated that the fact had little influence were 22% (16 persons) from the respondents. Almost same amount of responses 21% (15 persons)

was given to the middle grade 3 (Cannot say). Altogether ten persons had the opinion that the fact hardly had any influence (grade 2, 8%) or had no influence (grade 1, 6%).

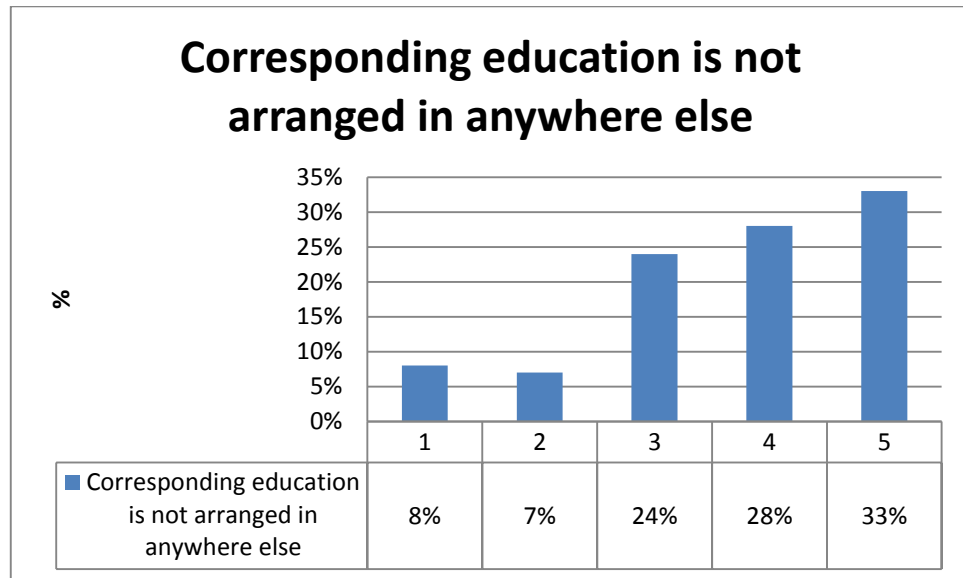


Figure 27 Corresponding education is not arranged in anywhere else

As figure 27 shows over half of the customers had the opinion that the fact that corresponding education was not arranged in anywhere else was also an important circumstance. The grade 5 (Influenced a lot) was given 33% (24 persons) answers. Twenty persons 28% thought the fact had little influence. A quite large amount of customers 24% (17 persons) could not really say what they thought about the fact. But 7% (5 persons) gave the grade 2 (Hardly had any influence) and 8% (6 persons) gave the grade 1 (Had no influence) to the question.

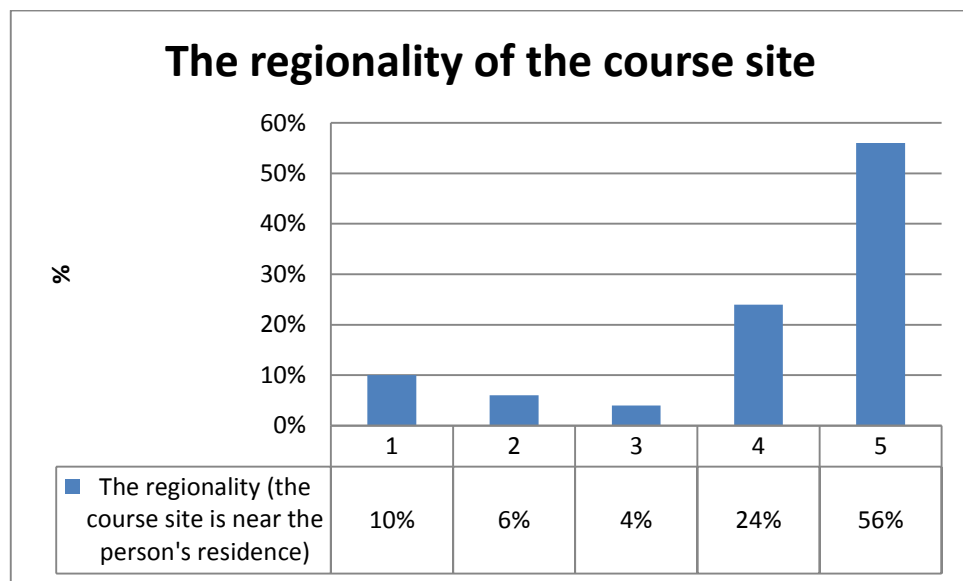


Figure 28 The regionality of the course site

Interestingly practical things (Figure 28) like the course site being near the person's residence played an important role when choosing HAMK Edu-

cation and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. Little over half 56% (40 persons) stated that course site being near to their home influenced a lot to their choice. The amount of 24% (17 persons) gave the grade 4 (Had little influence). Seven persons 10% from the respondents thought that the course site did not play any role (grade 1) and four persons (6%) said the fact hardly had any influence (grade 2). To 4% (3 persons) the question gave no opinion about the matter as the given was 3 (Cannot say).

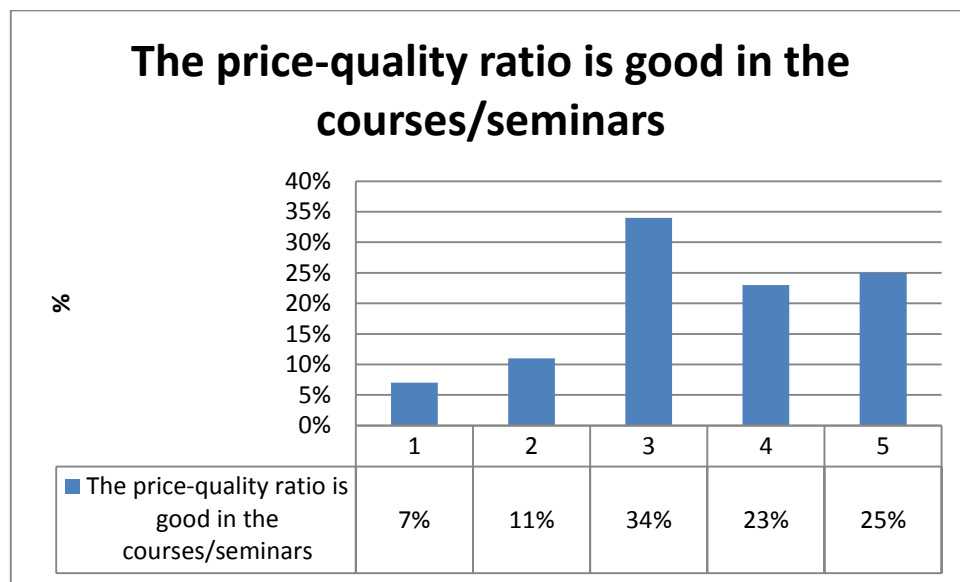


Figure 29 The price-quality ratio is good in the courses/ seminars

Figure 29 shows how big of a role did the price-quality ratio mean to the customers when choosing HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. Interestingly most of the customers 34% (24 persons) could not really say their opinion about the matter. Almost half of the customers on the other hand thought that the price-quality ratio had little or lot influence to their choice as the percentages were 25% (18 persons) to grade 5 and 23% (16 persons) to grade 4. Eight persons (11%) stated that the fact had hardly any influence and 7% (5 persons) put no weights to the fact as the grade given was 1 (Had no influence).

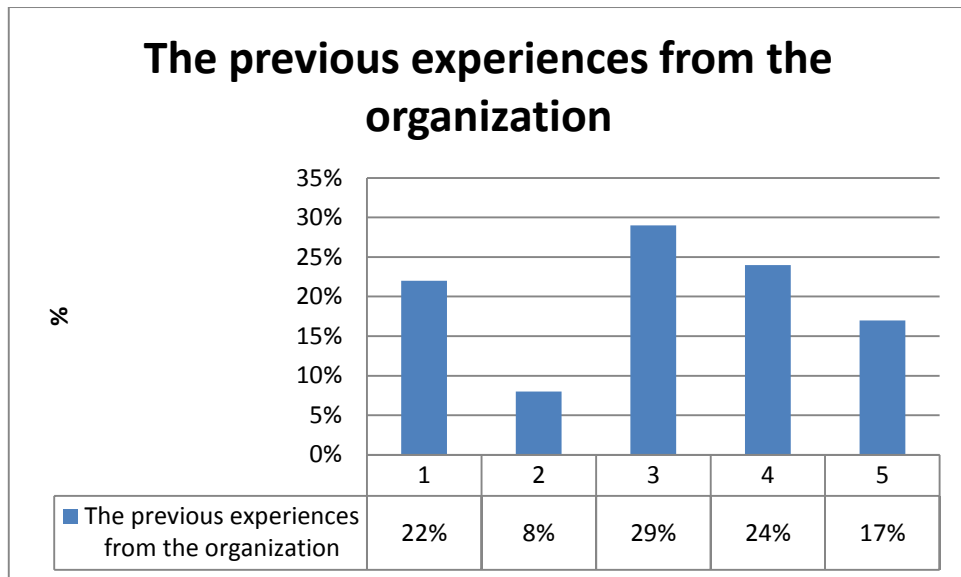


Figure 30 The previous experiences from the organization

How much the previous experiences about the organization meant to the customers is presented in the figure 30. Most of the respondents 29% (21 persons) could not really say if the previous experiences meant something to them or not (grade 3). But again about half of the customers put some weight to the matter as grade 4 (Had little influence) was given 24% (17 persons) answer and the grade 5 (Influenced a lot) was given 17% (12 persons) answer. Customers that had the opinion that the fact did not influence at all were 22% (16 persons) and customers that gave the grade 2 (Hardly had any influence) were 8% (6 persons).

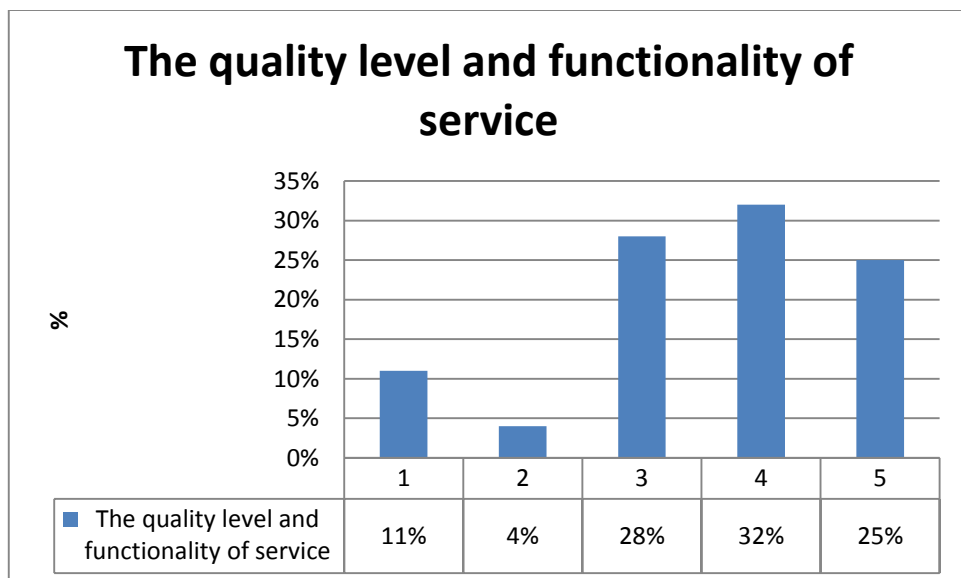


Figure 31 The quality level and functionality of service

Figure 31 demonstrates the importance of quality level and functionality of service to customers. The fact had little influence to 32% (23 persons) and a lot of influence to 25% (18 persons) from the respondents. A quite high amount of customers (28%, 20 persons) could not really say if this matter meant something to them or not as they gave the middle grade 3

(Cannot say). Altogether 15% from the respondents put only a little influence or no influence at all to the quality level and functionality of service as 11% (8 persons) gave the grade 1 (Had no influence) and 4% (3 persons) gave the grade 2 (Hardly had any influence).

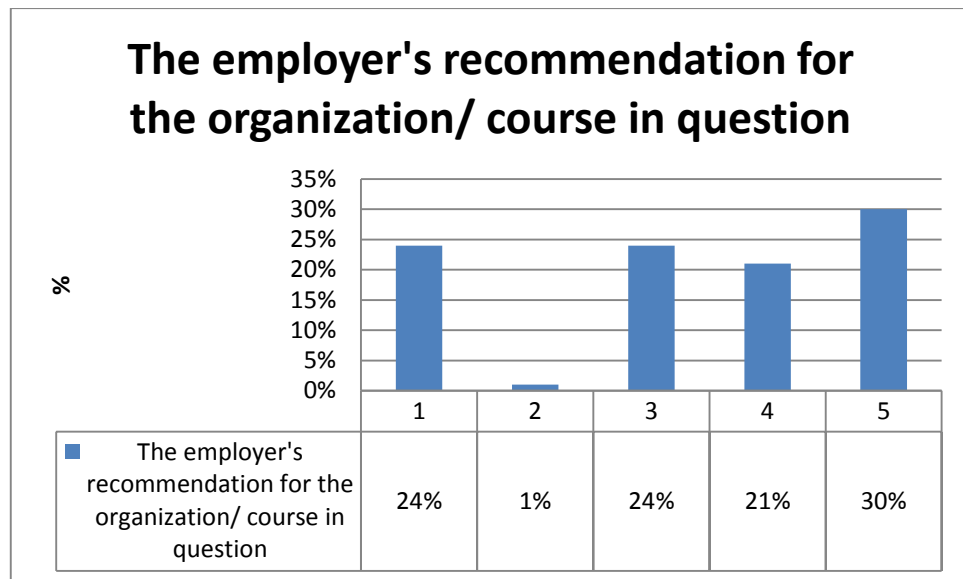


Figure 32 The employer's recommendation for the organization/ course in question

The employer's recommendation for the organization or course in question is presented in the figure 32. The highest amount of answers (30%, 22 persons) gave the grade 5 (Influenced a lot). Customers who had no opinion about the matter were 24% (17 persons). But also same amount of responses (24% 17 persons) gave the grade 1 (Had no influence). Fifteen persons (21%) thought that the fact influenced a little. And one person 1% stated that recommendation hardly had any influence.

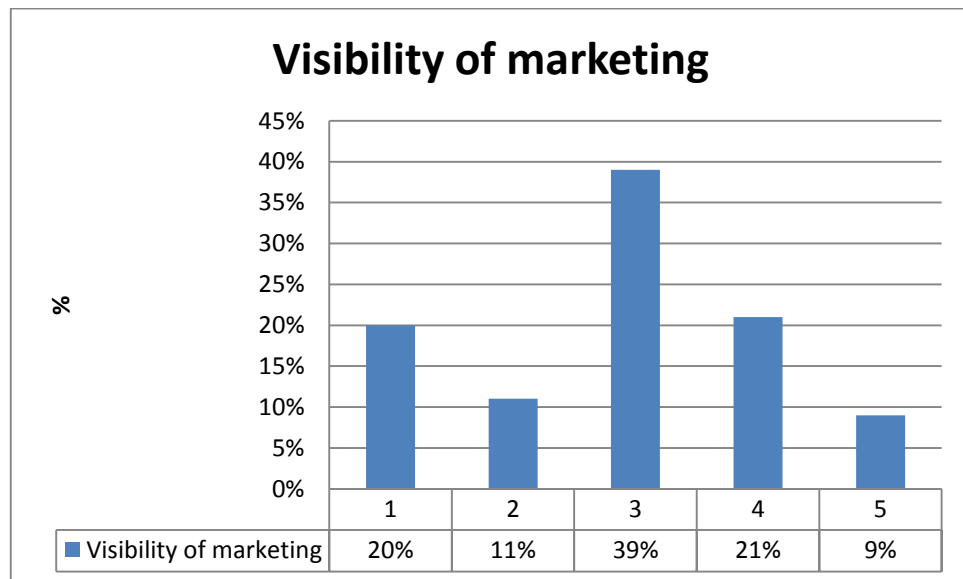


Figure 33 Visibility of marketing

Visibility of marketing meant no clear opinion to 39% (28 persons) when choosing the place for training (Figure 33). Altogether 30% put a little or a

lot of influence to it as the grade 4 (Influenced a little) earned 21% (15 persons) answers and grade 5 (Influenced a lot) had 9% (6 persons) answers. Almost same amount had the opposite opinion as the grade 1 (Had no influence) was given 20% (14 persons) answer and the grade 2 (Hardly had any influence) earned 11% (8 persons) opinion.

#### 4.4 Customers willingness to use the services of the organization again

Question number ten clarified the customers' willingness to use the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education again. This matter can also pinpoint the actual level of customer satisfaction. Customers are more likely to have been satisfied if they could consider maintaining the customer relationship later if continuing training is needed again. The answering possibilities to this question were yes, maybe, no or cannot say.

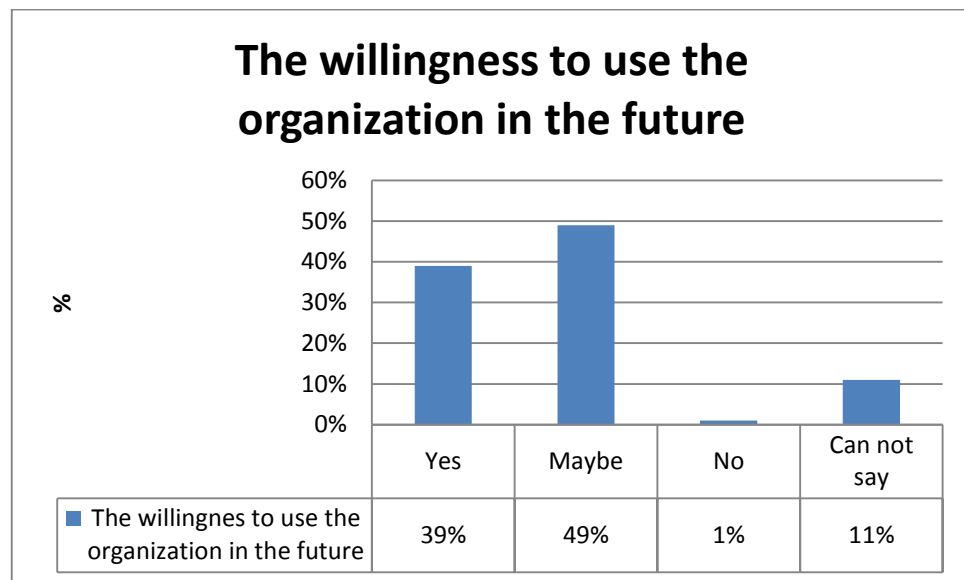


Figure 34 The willingness to use the organization in the future

Most of the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education could see themselves using the services of the organization in the future (Figure 34). The amount of 49% (35 persons) answered maybe and 39% (28 persons) answered yes to the question. Respondents that could not say were 11% (8 persons). And only one person 1% thought of never coming back for some reason and answered no.

Question 11 can also tell a lot about the customers' satisfaction towards HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education again. If a person is willing to recommend an organization used to others it most certainly indicates that the level of satisfaction is good. The answering possibilities to this question were yes, maybe, no or cannot say.

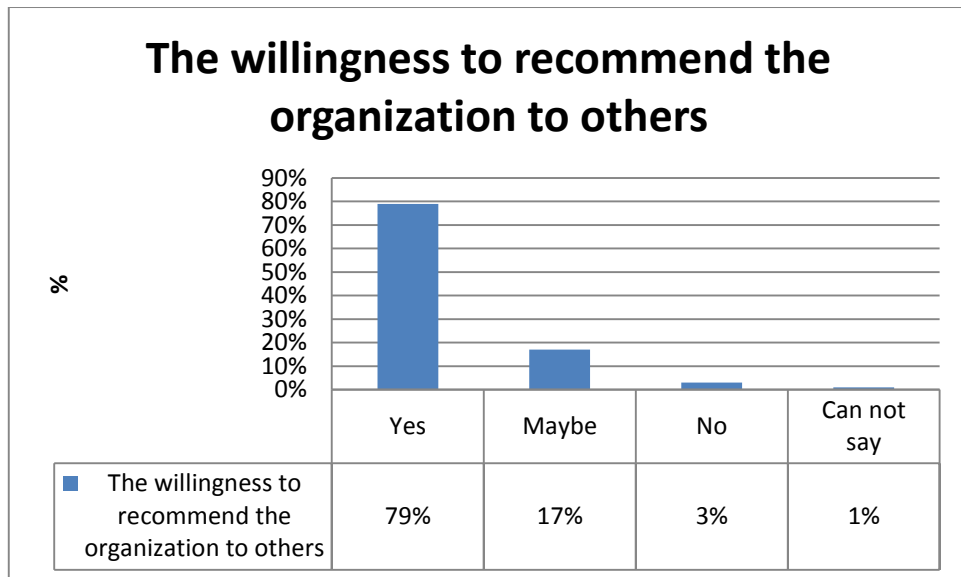


Figure 35 The willingness to recommend the organization to others

As figure 35 shows 79% (57 persons) could recommend the organization to others. Also 17% (12 persons) could maybe recommend the organization. For some reason two persons 3% answered no and 1% (1 person) had no clear opinion about the matter.

#### 4.5 Customer's experiences from other organizations compared to HAMK

As quality of service can be a competitive factor question 12 clarified whether or not customers have had used the services of other organizations. Question 13 asked the customers what level the service was in comparison with the service in HAMK. The answering possibilities to question 12 were yes and no. And if the answer was yes the customer was asked to name the organization used. The answering possibilities to question 13 were I have no point of comparison, the service has been better, cannot say, the service has been worse.

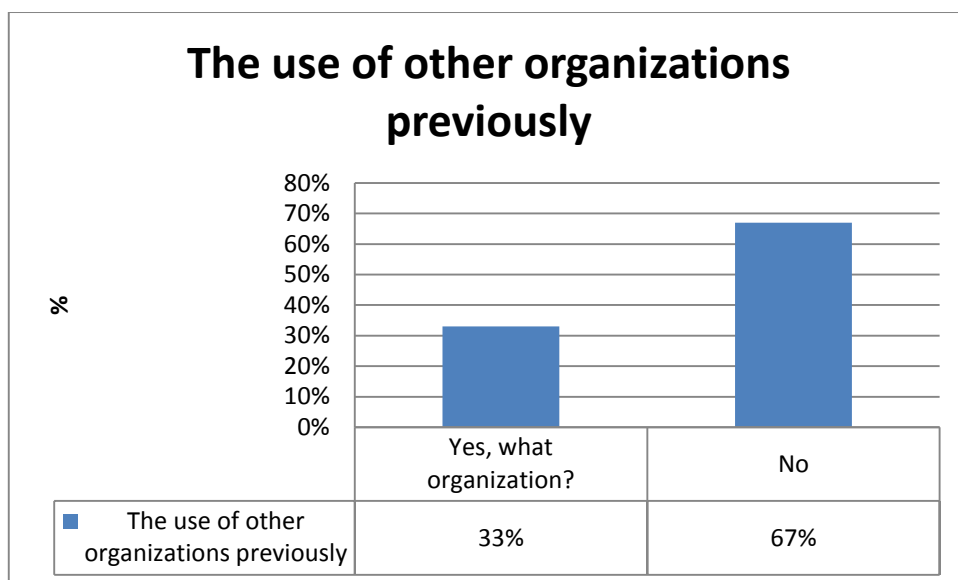


Figure 36 The use of other organizations previously

As figure 36 demonstrates most of the customers (67%, 48 persons) had never used the services of any other organization. About one third of the respondents (33%, 24 persons) have had experiences from other organizations. The other organizations used were Metropolia, LAMK, DIAK, Laurea, TAMK, SEAMK and SAMK which are Universities of Applied Sciences, Tampere and Jyväskylä Universities, vocational schools of KK-Tavastia and Tampere, The Finnish Association of Dementia and Summer Schools of Tampere and Häme Universities.



Figure 37 The quality level of service compared to other organizations

The figure 37 illustrates what the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education thought the quality level of service be compared to other organizations. Most of the respondents 43% (31 persons) could not say what they thought about the matter. Little



over one third (39%, 28 persons) said that they had no point of comparison. But thirteen customers (18%) thought that the service had been better. Interestingly the option of service had been worse had no answers.

#### 4.6 The total grade of service of the organization

The last multiple choice question 14 in the question form asked the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education to give a total grade to the service of the organization. The answering scale to the question was 1= Very bad, 2= Somewhat bad, 3= Cannot say, 4= Good, 5= Excellent.

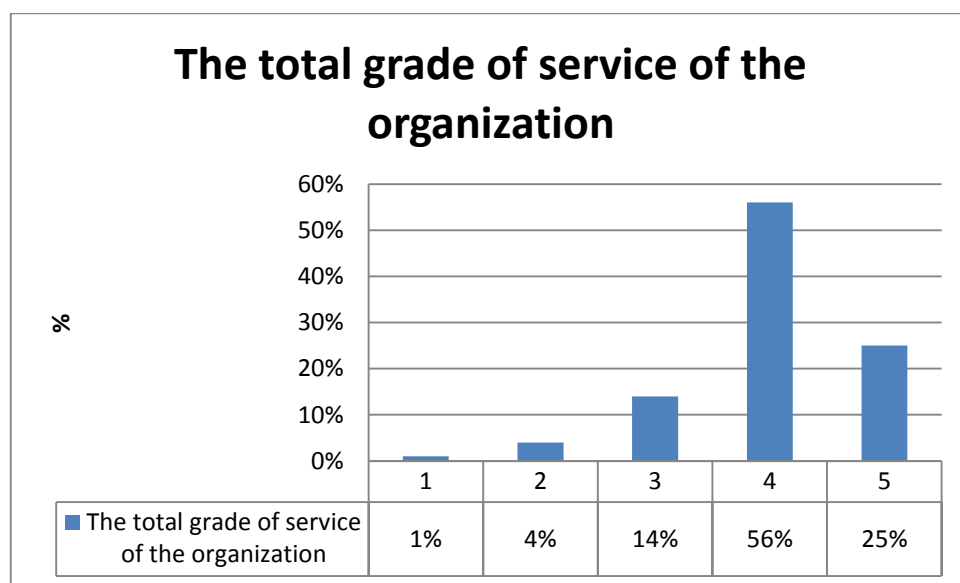


Figure 38 The total grade of service of the organization

As figure 38 shows over half of the customers (56%, 40 persons) thought that the total grade of service to the organization was good. One fifth of the respondents (25%, 18 persons) had the opinion that the service had been excellent. Ten respondents (14%) could not say what they thought the grade should be. Altogether 5% from the customers gave negative grading to this question as three persons (4%) stated that the total grade was 2 (Somewhat bad) and one person (1%) gave the grade 1 (very bad).

#### 4.7 A summary from the open ended questions

Altogether 21 respondents from the total amount of respondents which was 72 gave open feedback. These feedbacks are connected with the questions 7 and 15. The question number 7 asked the respondents what kind of information they wished to be in the invitation letter send by E-mail to them. The question number 15 inquired what things could be improved in the overall operations of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. There were some positive feedback included to the answers but most of the feedback was negative. This was interesting because most of the customers gave positive grades to multiple choice

questions but the main part of feedback from the open ended questions was still negative.

The positive feedback included things like extensive invitation letter with the information about parking, accurate information about time and a place as well as contents of the course day. Some lecturers were also mentioned by name and they also got some special recognition from the students.

Some of the respondents gave also constructive criticism. The negative feedback and also the things that needed improvements were especially the facilities and classrooms at use, the contents of the courses and expertise of the lecturers. One request came up very strongly and that was that the lecturers should have some hands-on experience and not only book learning about the matters taught in the courses. Some customer also said that the price of the courses is high when paid by the customer self.

## 5 THE SUMMARY FROM THE SURVEY

Altogether the customer satisfaction survey was answered by 72 customers of which 94% 68 persons were women and 6% 4 persons were men. This sex ratio is quite common in the courses of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education because that represents the same sex ratio that can be seen in the field of Social and Health sector the field being women dominated.

Most of the respondents belong to the age group of 51-60 years old. Also the age groups of 31-40 and 41-50 years old were well represented by the customers. The youngest age group of 18-30 years old and the oldest age group of over 60 years old got the smallest amount of responses. The figures can be explained by the fact that young people may be still studying or starting their families and are not in the working life. Similarly the employees of over 60 years may already be out from the working life or they do not feel the need to educate themselves anymore as they will soon retire.

Clearly most of the customers came to the courses with the funding of their employers or The Office of Apprenticeships which is also related to studying with the help of the one's work place. This can reflect the fact that the employers of the Social and Health sector appreciate their workforce and they want to enable their employees educating themselves further. A large amount of customers took part to the courses so that they paid the course fee themselves. That tells a lot about the familiarity and dependability of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education because self-paying customers could have chosen any education facility they wanted but still they chose HAMK.

The respondents of the customer satisfaction survey were most satisfied to the marketing of the courses by the organization's own Internet pages. The Internet pages were also seen functional and clear and the information at the pages was considered to be current and accurate. The marketing with

E-mail ads was also considered to be practical option. The least favourable marketing channel was marketing by newspaper ads. That is luckily the least used option when marketing is done in the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education because that is the most expensive way to market and that has no guarantee of accessibility to customers.

Most of the customers were satisfied to the overall service and operations of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education and they could see themselves using the services of the organization also in the future. One third of the respondents said that they had also used the services of organization in the past. When the customers compared the service quality of others to HAMK the latter was graded better. Almost all the respondents were also willing or maybe willing to recommend the organization to others.

The customers were mainly very satisfied to the quality of customer service in both in general as well as during the course and seminar days. Personnel's friendliness towards customers was considered to be excellent. The respondents also thought that the personnel's expertise and professional skills met their expectations. The only thing that needed improvements was the personnel's accessibility by phone. The customers felt that it was easier to reach the personnel by E-mail than it was by phone.

In practical level the customers thought that enrolment to courses and seminars by Internet based program was working well to them. Invitation letter by E-mail was considered to be a good thing. Special thanks were given to the detailed information about parking spaces in the invitation letter. Although the invitation letter already consist the information about the time, place and timetable of the course day the respondents still highlighted that those information should be included in the invitation and in a clear way. Directions and signs on the info screens and classroom doors were considered to be sufficient. Some negative feedback was given to the appropriateness of the classrooms. In the open ended feedback question some customers mentioned that the classrooms were too small for a big group of students and that it was difficult to see and hear if seated in the back of the room. In too small classrooms the organization of the seats was considered to be challenging and often a student was forced to sit sidelong towards the lecturer. Otherwise the arrangements of the course and seminar days were fluent according to the respondents.

The most important reason why customers chose HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education was the fact that it was near where they lived. Other matters of importance that were graded high were the specialization of the organization to arranging Social and Health sector trainings and the expertise of the lecturers. The price-quality ratio of the courses was considered to be good by half of the customers. A large amount of respondents had no opinion about the matter but that can reflect fact that many of the customers come to the courses by funding of the employer so the price has no meaning to them. Previous experiences had some value for about half of the customers but again one third of the

respondents said that previous experiences meant nothing when making the choice. Also in this section the customers pointed out with their responses that the quality level and functionality of the service was a key influencing factor why they had chosen HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education as well as the employer's recommend towards the organization.

### 5.1 Strengths based on the survey

A clear strength that the customer satisfaction survey revealed was the service quality of the personnel. In every question that the service quality of the personnel was concluded the grades given were positive. As discussed in the chapter 2.4 the importance of service quality cannot be passed by. HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education has a lot of competitors e.g. other Universities of Applied Sciences that organize same kinds of courses so a key factor how the organization can differ from the competitors can be the quality of service.

Another strength that came upon was that about two thirds of the customers felt that they could see themselves using the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education again. This reflects to the possibility of a long term customer relationship and as the matter handled in chapter 2.2 customer satisfaction effects to the formulation of long term customer relationships.

About the satisfaction towards the service quality tells also the fact that almost all of the respondents could see themselves recommend the organization to others. The importance of customers' willingness to recommend is also covered in the chapter 2.2.

### 5.2 Challenges and weaknesses based on the survey

Based on the research marketing of the courses of the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education can be considered as a challenge. Most of the marketing is done by E-mail and the E-mail addresses are collected by hand from the Websites of the Social and Health sector facilities near Hämeenlinna or in Hämeenlinna. About one third of the customers said that the visibility of the marketing had no meaning to them when choosing the organization. That and the fact that newspaper marketing was not so appreciated by the customers can reflect that only customers that are local or live somewhere near the organization can be reached by the marketing actions. This is somewhat true that most of the respondents stated that they chose HAMK because it was near where they lived but it can also be so because the marketing done by E-mail had reached them.

Another challenge to HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education was that customers felt that it was easier to reach the personnel by E-mail than it was by phone. Because the team behind the courses consists of only three persons the accessibility to them by

phone can be a challenge due to the hectic schedules. Because the same three persons are involved in the actual course and seminar days as they do the office work also the time that a phone can be switched on is minimal during the course days. Approaches done by E-mail are more often answered before or after the course days when there are the least busy moments. So often it is easier for the customer to send an E-mail than try to phone several times a day to get their matter solved.

Weakness that the customer satisfaction survey revealed was the sometimes too small or otherwise in appropriate classrooms. The matter of the facilities is difficult to influence at the moment because the building where HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education is situated is old and the classrooms do not meet the requirements of more modern standards of today. There is also a problem of excessive use of the campus and the biggest and more modern rooms are often in the use of the degree programs of the day time students. And the situation is so that those students are considered to be the most important ones and that is why they often get the best classrooms.

Another factor of weakness that came upon was that some of the lecturers lack the recent experience of work life in the field they teach. Lacking of recent work life experience concerns especially the lecturers and teachers in the payroll of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing. Because the field of Social and Health sector is constantly evolving it is difficult for the lectures to keep up with the new inventions and operation models of nursing. There is no obligation for the lectures to train themselves in the actual work life. So it is difficult for them to teach students of the Continuing Education that come from the work life anything new that they do not already know. Continuing Education also uses outside lecturers e.g. doctors in the courses but because the outside lecturers are often so expensive it is more economical to use the teachers of our own. This matter is difficult to solve because customers are not so satisfied to the courses if lecturers lack the information. And customer satisfaction is one of the most important factors as customer satisfaction is considered to be of the significant factors for the success of a company. This matter is discussed in the chapter 2.2.

## 6 CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT SUGGESTIONS

All in all doing this comprehensive customer satisfaction survey for the customers of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education was an interesting process. The survey revealed much more accurate information about the level of customer satisfaction than the regular course feedbacks do that are collected at the end of each course. The regular course feedbacks only collect information about the customers' satisfaction towards that specific course day, e.g. lecturers and do not tell anything about the overall situation. This kind of more comprehensive customer satisfaction survey should be done more regularly in order to really find out the level of the actual customer satisfaction. Especially when customer for some reason ends the customer relationship it is vital for the organization to know why it happened. If the organization do not know the

reasons for possible disappointments the corrective actions are impossible to do. And although good customer service and handling the complaint well does not necessarily correct the situation altogether it might be the reason why a customer chooses to remain in the customer relationship and does not end it completely.

Customer satisfaction is considered to be one of the key competitive factors that organizations and companies have in today's markets when new product inventions are done every day. That is why the importance of customer satisfaction should not be passed. Especially that applies with service sector organizations such as HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. Because many competitors have the same core products the only way to separate one-self from the competitors is the quality of service.

Satisfied customers are also vital free marketing channel for companies. What better way there could be to market than a satisfied customer is? Satisfied customers market the companies they are satisfied with without even acknowledging it. But on the other hand mouth to mouth word also travels fast when there are bad experiences. Organizations should bear in mind that bad word travels even faster from customer to customer than good word so even this speaks out from the importance of customer satisfaction. Satisfied customer is also more likely to come back and a long term customer relationship can be established. The formulation of long term customer relationships can be seen in HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education because many of the customers could see themselves participating to the organization's courses again and are even willing to recommend the organization to others.

Customer satisfaction is also a matter of costs to the organization. It has been studied that it is cheaper for the company to maintain existing customer relationship than it is to acquire new customers. And it is even more expensive to get a disappointed customer back if the customer relationship has ended because of dissatisfaction.

Most of the customers were satisfied with the service they got when using the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. As explained in the theory section the quality of service is one of the key points for organizations to separate themselves and be better off in the competitive situation. Customers were satisfied with the overall level of service, the service during course and seminar days and also the accessibility of the personnel by phone and E-mail that can also be considered to be part of the customer service.

Although the overall impressions from the customer satisfaction survey were positive certain points that could be developed rose up from the responses of the customers. First point of development could be intensification of marketing so that marketing would reach possible customers better outside the near regions of Hämeenlinna. The questions revealed that most of the customers could not really say their opinion about whether or not

they thought that the marketing actions done by E-mail or newspaper ads were efficient or not.

A common way of marketing in the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education is collecting E-mail addresses from the Internet and sending a mass message to hundreds of addresses. A suggestion to accelerate this method is needed because of the responses of the customers. From the employees perspective it is very time consuming to collect the addresses from the Internet and the E-mail messages do not necessarily reach customers in the right way. The reason is that messages easily tend to get lost in massive amount of E-mails people get these days. The messages are also really hard to be made attractive so that they raise true interest and that way stand out from other marketing messages. And the last point that makes E-mail messages inefficient is that there is no way of knowing does the message reach the right person who makes the educating decisions in the organizations. There is no point to send massive amounts of marketing E-mails to employees if they are not in the position to make educating decisions concerning themselves. And on the other hand managing directors may be snowed under so that one impersonal E-mail ad can easily end up in a trash can. HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education should think that is the mass messages worth sending. A more efficient way of marketing could be for example trying to formulate more personal connections to customers and especially customer companies. After the connections are made then a tailored more personal E-mail ad could be sent to accompany the previous personal contact.

There are also challenges when using newspaper ads for HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. First of all marketing through newspaper ads is expensive and secondly as the responses of the customers revealed it is not seen as a very visible way of marketing. The way to accelerate the marketing through newspaper ads could be to clarify which trade journals or other newspaper are most read ones within the customers. A suggestive questionnaire could be done during the course days the customers attend to. And then use those most read ones as a marketing channel.

Most of the customers answered that they were satisfied with the classrooms where the course and seminar days were organized but some opposite opinions rouse from the open ended questions where the customers were asked developments suggestions. Those opposite opinions were that some improvement should be made to the facilities where the course days are located.

At the moment most of the courses and seminar days organized by the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education are in the in buildings of Lahdensivu campus. The campus area consists of three different buildings. One of the buildings belongs to the education of professional teachers and the other two to social and health sector educations. The most modern facilities are in the building of professional teacher education and unfortunately those classrooms are the most

reserved ones. That means that in practice most of the courses of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education are in the older less modern building of social and health sector education. Especially the Ainola building is old and not so modern. Often it is the case that too many adult students are cramped in a too small classroom that is not even designed for that many persons. Especially the air conditioning is not sufficient for that kind of use and that can be seen during the course days when the air simply runs up. Another matter is that most the adult students that come from the work life are used to more modern facilities. It is simply a fact that continuing education trainings should meet the standards of today's working life also when the facilities are concerned. A solution for the problem could be that at least the big seminars of over hundred participants were organized in the Visamäki campus in the future. Visamäki campus is about one kilometre from the Lahdensivu campus area and it is the main campus of the whole HAMK. There are more modern facilities and big auditoriums at use as most of the buildings are rather new and designed to meet the standards of today's world. The only problem is that also Visamäki is cramped with students so it could be problematic to find free days for the courses and seminars of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education as there are so many persons in need for those facilities already in line all the time.

The specialization of Continuing education to arranging Social and Health sector trainings was seen as one of the most important reasons for the customers when choosing the place where to educate themselves as adult student. And the expertise of the lecturers in the organization was answered to be good or excellent by over half of the respondents. But again some developments suggestions rouse up from the open ended questions as the expertise of the lecturers was concerned. The courses and seminars of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education are organized so that the main lecturers are from the organization itself. After the content of the course is designed it is carefully thought through that do the organization's own teachers have the know-how or the skills for the course or seminar in question and if not outside lecturers are then used to complement so that the course meets the standards of the customers. The organization's own teachers are much cheaper to use than outside lecturers.

Sometimes the situation is that no matter how good the course content and lecturers seems in paper the feedback from the adult students is that they got nothing new that they did not already know before. The fact is that continuing education is demanding for the professionals of working life as they tend to be already experts of their own field so producing new information is simply a difficult task. The negative feedback of this sort often appears when the lecturers used are the organization's own teachers. This is because teachers do not necessary have recent real work life experiences if they have been teachers for a long period of time without doing the actual social and health sector work. The lack of recent work experiences of real working life is often criticized by the students as they tend to have more up to date information about treatment practices themselves. A development suggestion for this problem could be to use more outside lec-



turers at some areas. Or to use those teachers that visit working life regularly by doing real work beside of teaching to keep up with the new information and development. Of course there should be some balance found about the costs of the outside lecturers, own lecturers and the quality of the course. But in the long run more satisfied customers could enable more growth than unsatisfied ones.

One development suggestion that did not emerge from the customer satisfaction survey is to be aware of the cultural factors in the future if students from different nationalities start to use the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education. Foreign students could be soon attending to the courses for two reasons. Firstly there is a lot of immigration to Finland for several of reasons so foreign people will be more and more seen in the workforce of the field of social and health sector that are organization's customers. Secondly if HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education start to operate more as Development Plan for Internationalization 2015 there will be more connections to foreign people in the future.

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ACCOMPANYING LETTER

Dear customer,

It is very important to us in the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education to find out the level of our customers' satisfaction towards all our services concerning education and training services we offer. Based on the research it is possible for us to develop our services in the future so that they will better serve our customers.

We are executing a customer satisfaction survey, in which we hope that You can replay to. The survey is part of my final thesis work in the HAMK University of Applied Sciences Degree Program in International Business. The survey consists of 15 questions and it takes about few minutes to answer to it. There are no questions which concern the respondents name or personal information. All the answers will be handled in confidence.

You have time to answer to the survey until 17.4.2012.

We hope that You will respond to the survey because Your opinion is important to us!

If You have any questions about the survey please feel free to contact me by email [terhi.tamminen\(at\)hamk.fi](mailto:terhi.tamminen@hamk.fi).

The survey opens up by clicking the link below:  
<http://www.webropolsurveys.com/S/5CC7862DDB303BC5.par>

If the link does not open by some reason You can copy it and paste it to the address field in the Web browser.

Best Regards  
Terhi Tamminen  
koulutusassistentti  
HAMK University of Applied Sciences

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY AT HÄME UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CENTRE OF WELLBEING CONTINUING EDUCATION

**1. Sex**

Female  Male

**2. Age of the respondent**

Between the age of 18 and 30 years   
 Between the age of 31 and 40 years   
 Between the age of 41 and 50 years   
 Between the age of 51 and 60 years   
 Over 60 years

**3. Payer of the course/ seminar**

I will pay the course myself   
 My employer pays the course   
 The Office of Apprenticeships pays the course   
 The course is paid by some other e.g. foundation

The answering scale in the following questions is 1= Failed completely, 2= Failed fairly, 3= Cannot say, 4= Successful, 5= Successful completely

**4. In what level have you experienced the following points in HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education?**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Marketing of the courses/seminars (newspaper ads)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing of the courses/seminars (E-mail ads)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing of the courses/seminars (own Internet pages)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Functionality and clarity of the Internet pages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Currency of the course information in the Internet pages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. In what level have you experienced the following points in HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education?**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The quality of customer service in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendliness of the personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The expertise and the professional skills of the personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility of the personnel by E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility of the personnel by phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personnel's service quality during the courses/ seminars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. In what level have you experienced the following points in HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education?**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Enrolment by Internet based program to courses and seminars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invitation letter by E-mail to courses and seminars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7. What kind of information should be in the invitation letter sent to you by E-mail before the course or the seminar you are attending to?**

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**8. In what level have you experienced the following points in HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education?**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The currency and clarity of information in the invitation letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directions and signs during the course/ seminar day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The general fluency of the arrangements during the course/ seminar days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The appropriateness of the course/ seminar classrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The answering scale in the following questions is 1= Had no influence, 2= Hardly had any influence, 3= Cannot say, 4= Had little influence, 5= Influenced a lot

**9. How much did the following matters influence in your choice of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education?**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The specialization of Continuing education to arranging Social and Health sector trainings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The expertise of the lecturers in the organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corresponding education is not arranged in anywhere else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional reasons of the course site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The price-quality ratio is good in the courses/seminars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Previous experiences from the organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The quality level and functionality of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The employer's recommendation for the organization/ course in question	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visibility of marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**10. Could you consider using the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education again?**

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Cannot say

**11. Are you willing to recommend the services of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education to others?**

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Cannot say

**12. Have you used the corresponding services of other education organizations previously?**

- Yes, what organizations?
- No

**If you answered yes what were the education organizations used previously?**

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**13. What has the quality level of service of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education been compared to others?**

- I have no point of comparison
- The service has been better
- I cannot say
- The service has been worse

The answering scale to next question is 1= Very bad, 2= Somewhat bad, 3= Cannot say, 4= Good, 5= Excellent

**14. What is the total grade given to the service of HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education?**

The total grade given 1 2 3 4 5



**15. What development suggestions do you have for the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education?**

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**Thank you for your answers and welcome back to continue your customer relationship!**

OPEN ANSWERS TO OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Answers to the question number 7. What kind of information should be in the invitation letter sent to you by E-mail before the course or the seminar you are attending to?

- The invitation letter now in use has been comprehensive. Especially because there has been a map about the parking areas involved.
- All the necessary information has been in the invitation letter. It has been great that before every course day reminder letter has been sent to E-mail about the course day time-tables, program and location. This has been very nice. I did not expect this service. Thank you!
- I would like to receive the information about the content of the course.
- There has been sufficiently information in the invitation letter. The location where the course is, is the lunch been organized by the course organizer, the coffee break, timetables for the day, etc.
- The invitation letter in a current way is ok.
- There should be information about the location, timetable and lecturer in the invitation letter.
- There should be more information about the content of the course in the invitation letter.
- In my opinion the invitation letters already contains the necessary information.
- I would like to have the information about the timetable, location, lecturer and what course I am attending to in the invitation letter.
- The information about the location of the course, the timetables and the lecturers.
- There should be the information about the name of the course, time and length of the course, location, targets of the course, contents of the course and lecturers and their titles and backgrounds in the invitation letter.
- I would like to receive the program of the course in the invitation letter.
- There should be the basic things, time and a place and of course information if some special equipment is needed in the course, etc.
- The occasion and the location of the course. There should be the content as a whole and specified day by day. Also there should be instructions for the possible pre assignments and the contact persons.
- The location of the course site and where the nearest bus station and the railway station are compared to the course site. And also the possibilities for parking your own car.
- I have so little experience that I cannot say.
- The invitation letter should contain the information what is the target group of the course the length of the course, cost of the course and the reason why the person should attend to the course in question.
- I would like to have the program of the course day, information about parking, means of communication and is there possibility for lunch.
- There should be information about who the course is intended.



Answers to the question number 15. What development suggestions do you have for the HAMK Education and Research Centre of Wellbeing Continuing Education?

- The price of the course is expensive. A really bad thing for a person paying the course herself.
- I would like to have more doctor lectures. And also more information and guidance in connection with physical ability to function.
- The course facilities could be better. It is hard to sit the whole day neck at an angle in a classroom full with people. Otherwise the service is good and appropriate.
- I have experienced the classrooms to be bad. The groups are large and because of the long drive I always end up sitting in the back of the classroom where I have to sit at an angle and I do not hear or see properly.
- There should be more short courses, length maybe one to five day about one's professional continuing education.
- The guidance for the use of Moodle should be done with time at first because most of the adult students have not used this kind of learning base before. And before the Moodle guidance all the computers should be checked that are they functioning properly and there are enough computers so that every student is able to try the program themselves when the teacher is there.
- If this is the right place to give feedback about the parking facilities it is especially hard in the winter time to find parking space anywhere. This is a true place for improvement.
- Maybe it could be a good thing if the lecturers occasionally spent some time doing "real work". Then it could be easier for them to identify themselves to the matters of the employees/ students. Then the education could be more up to date.
- The lecturers should know the content of the course inside out and they should know how to apply the content to the work history of the participant. The lectures should work in the same field with the target group.
- The facilities need some modification. It is horrible to listen to a lecture a whole day in a classroom where the chairs and tables are crooked in comparison with the lecturers.
- There should be more professional lectures targeted for the nursing staff. Those lectures should be the length of a half day or a day.
- It could be great if the lectures could have some practical experience from the topic of the course.
- I think the question number 13 is pointless or it should contain also an alternative "just as good". Why the services in question should be compared. The best thing would be if all the courses in every school would be high level and good courses. Because the question was compulsory to answer I answered I cannot say. When made to answer according the alternatives given the results become wrong.
- The course was made by KELA so it is hard to evaluate the quality of the course. I understood that the KELA demanded for this kind of course so I criticized already during the course for the excessive use of time for the topic in question. So this cannot be put for a flaw or inferiority for HAMK. When you pay the course yourself and one loses the day's income you may expect too much from the course and sitting there for nothing is frustrating. Hopefully HAMK offers qualitative continuing education about physiotherapy in the future.

## Development of Customer Satisfaction

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- The general grade for the course is 5 which is totally the credit of the course's leading lecturer.
- I would like the lecturers to be more familiarized with the subject they are teaching.
- The lectures could be better prepared and familiarized with the content of the course and for the questions made during the course.
- The lecturers were lacking knowledge and practical experience.