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**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR**  
**ACTILIFE FITNESS CENTER - KOKKOLA**

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## Thesis Abstract

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Fitness industry is predicted to have a bright, blooming future. In a world of lots of competition, customer satisfaction is an important key to ensure customer loyalty as well as the living of a company. Since customers are pleased with the company, they can bring more potential customers by word of mouth communication. Therefore, a company should retain customer satisfaction by providing them excellent quality of services.

This study is related to measure the customer satisfaction level of Actilife Fitness Center – Kokkola. With the strengths of innovative technology supported by Hur, Actilife constantly develops to bring customer joy, energy and good feeling.

Customer satisfaction theories and service literatures are considered as the reference to the main findings of the survey. Throughout the research, Actilife can measure where it lies in customers' mind. Besides, the company can develop its strengths as well as improve weaknesses through the recommendation.

### **Key works:**

Customer satisfaction, services, Actilife Kuntokeskus

## **FOREWORD**

First of all, I would like to give my deep gratitude to Mr. Kai Ahlroth, the manager of Actilife Fitness Center, who provides me with a chance to conduct the customer satisfaction survey for Actilife. My sincere gratitude is sent to Actilife staff as well as customers for helping me during my thesis period.

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## Table of Contents

### ABSTRACT

### FOREWORD

<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Aim of the thesis	1
1.2 Methodology	2
<b>2 IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN A SERVICE COMPANY</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Customer Satisfaction	4
2.1.1 <i>Defining customer satisfaction</i>	4
2.1.2 <i>Creating customer satisfaction</i>	5
2.1.2.1 Meeting customer expectation	5
2.1.2.2 Providing a high quality of services	7
2.1.2.3 Creating communications	8
2.1.3 <i>Measuring customer satisfaction</i>	9
2.1.4 <i>Managing customer satisfaction</i>	9
2.1.4.1 Dealing with customer feedbacks	10
2.1.4.2 Organizational and service improvement	10
2.2 Services	11
2.2.1 <i>Definition and Characteristics of Service</i>	11
2.2.1.1 Service's Definition	11
2.2.1.2 Service's Characteristics	12
2.2.2 <i>Fitness Services</i>	13
2.2.2.1 History of Fitness	13
2.2.2.2 Fitness in Finland	14
2.2.2.3 Fitness services area	15
<b>3 ACTILIFE FITNESS CENTER – KOKKOLA</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1 Overview of Actilife Fitness Center	17
3.2 Actilife's SWOT analysis	18
<b>4 ANALYZING RESEARCH FINDINGS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Customer is a key valuable factor in a company. Dealing with people seems to be the most challenging task for management. Most of companies are moving from product oriented strategy to customer oriented strategy. They focus on customers' needs and wants as well as provide the better services to satisfy customers. Customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction can decide the existence or death of a company. If possible to measure and improve customer satisfaction, a company can keep customer stay longer period of time.

Measuring customer satisfaction with products is hard but it is even more difficult to know how happy they are with services. Due to the fact that service is intangible, customers cannot directly measure the quality of service. Therefore, they usually evaluate services based on the tangible clues associated to services such as service facilities, communication, etc. With a long and rich history of fitness, this industry is predicted to grow more and more in future as many people are facing to physical and mental problems. Gym, exercise classes and personal training are the main services providing by a health fitness center. The better quality of service is, the more satisfied the customer is.

Actilife Fitness Center in Kokkola is a quite new commercial fitness club which has been established for 8 years until now. With the strengths of diversified classes, innovative technology such as modern equipment, simultaneous two-in-one premises' key and membership magnet card, Actilife would like to bring customer *joy, energy and good feeling* as stated in the slogan.

### 1.1 Aim of the thesis

The aim of the thesis is to examine to what extent customers are satisfied with the services provided by Actilife. The measurement is based on the tangible clues of

fitness services such as gym equipment, exercise classes, communication, staff, facilities, etc. Again, it is strongly emphasized that through customer satisfaction measurement, a company knows where it lies in customers' mind. Besides, a company can clearly see what are its strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats it might face in the future.

Furthermore, hopefully this customer satisfaction survey can help Actilife understand better their customers and improve the quality of service as well as customer satisfaction. Since there are a lot of strong competitors in the Kokkola area, only by satisfying customers is the insurance key to ensure customers not to change their choice. In addition, make customer more pleased is good way to advertise a company and get more potential customers via the satisfied customers' storytellings and recommendations.

## **1.2 Methodology**

Secondary data and primary data could both use in collecting the information while quantitative data could be analyzed by SPSS software and Microsoft Office Excel.

Secondary data is the information collected for the purpose of understanding and supporting to the research. The sources of secondary data can be found from the existing information such as books, journals and internet websites. This data may be not accurate enough or unfit well the problem research but it can develop to better focus on primary data. (Gerson 1993, 54.)

Primary data is the information collected by a person doing research. It is directly involved in problem finding. Primary data is much more expensive but in the other hand, it is more accurate than secondary data. The sources of primary data can be found in a number of means such as true experiments, surveys, questionnaires, interviews and case study. (Gerson 1993, 54.)

Qualitative research can be collected through observation, interviews, focus groups and personal experience. This type of research is open question in which customers can freely express their opinions. (Gerson 1993, 55.) It is kind of discussing or free style of writing so that customers can reveal their feelings without limitation.

Quantitative research is the statistic measurement such as a large scale collected by a questionnaire, or survey. It can be done in writing, oral or over telephone. Since we have got the information collection, we can use some IT supportive software to analyze the data. (Gerson 1993, 54.)

In this research, secondary data is collected from books, e-journals providing by Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences. Moreover, a huge of information can be found from rich sources in Internet sites. Primary data collection is got from the questionnaire contributed to customers in Actilife premises. The questionnaire was designed in both an English and a Finnish version. There were totally 62 customers who answered the questionnaires in which only 3 respondents filled in the English version while the others filled in the Finnish version. Open questions and multiple-choice questions were both used in the questionnaire.

The collected data was analyzed by SPSS software and Microsoft Office Excel. The idea is that all information getting from questionnaire is entered into SPSS software, then using this software to analyze the results. For multiple choice questions, information from SPSS is received and entered in Excel to get the complete readable tables and graphs.

## **2 IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN A SERVICE COMPANY**

It is absolutely necessary to understand the theoretical knowledge before going into further details the survey because it supports to develop the questionnaire making as well as the findings analyzing. First of all, the definition of customer satisfaction is summarized concisely. Then continuing to find out the way to create, measure and manage customer satisfaction. Secondly, services and its characteristics are mentioned in purpose of supporting to fitness services. The history of fitness as well as fitness industry in Finland also is discussed to give the idea why fitness is becoming popular today.

### **2.1 Customer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is not a new business term but many companies fail to reach their customers' expectation. There are a large amount of companies that went to bankrupt because of their failure in dealing with their customers. To estimate the strength of a company, there are so many things can be listed here, such as market share, revenue, assets, size of company, etc. However, the most valuable thing of a company is customers. If customers are not happy with the company any more, they can leave without regret. Hence once a company loses them, it takes even more time and money to get them back. Excellent quality of product or service is not enough for the existence of a company. Company should get "married" with its customers in order to have a deeper understanding about them.

#### ***2.1.1 Defining customer satisfaction***

What is customer satisfaction? Philip Kotler, the father of marketing said "*if the product matches expectations, customer is satisfied; if it exceeds them, the consumer is highly satisfied; if it falls short, the consumer is dissatisfied*". Although Kotler did not



define directly about customer satisfaction, he mentioned the important point is that a customer is satisfied when his expectation on a product is met or surpassed. Whereas, Oliver defined “*satisfaction is the consumer’s fulfillment response*” (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler 2006, 110). The definition of Oliver is wider than Kotler because he not only mentioned the product perspective but also other expectations in customer’s point of view.

*“Customer satisfaction, or dissatisfaction is the feeling of customer has about the extent to which their experiences with an organization their need”* (Hill, Roche & Allen 2007, 32.). It is customer perception that her expectation has been meet or surplus. (Gerson 1993, 5.) In general, customers are satisfied when their expectation is met or exceeded.

Satisfaction is an attitude while loyalty is a behavior. Therefore, customer satisfaction can drive customer loyalty. (Hill et al. 2007, 32-33.) Customer loyalty will purchase our product and service in repeat. In term of company management, it is more cost saving and profitable to keep current customers than attract potential ones.

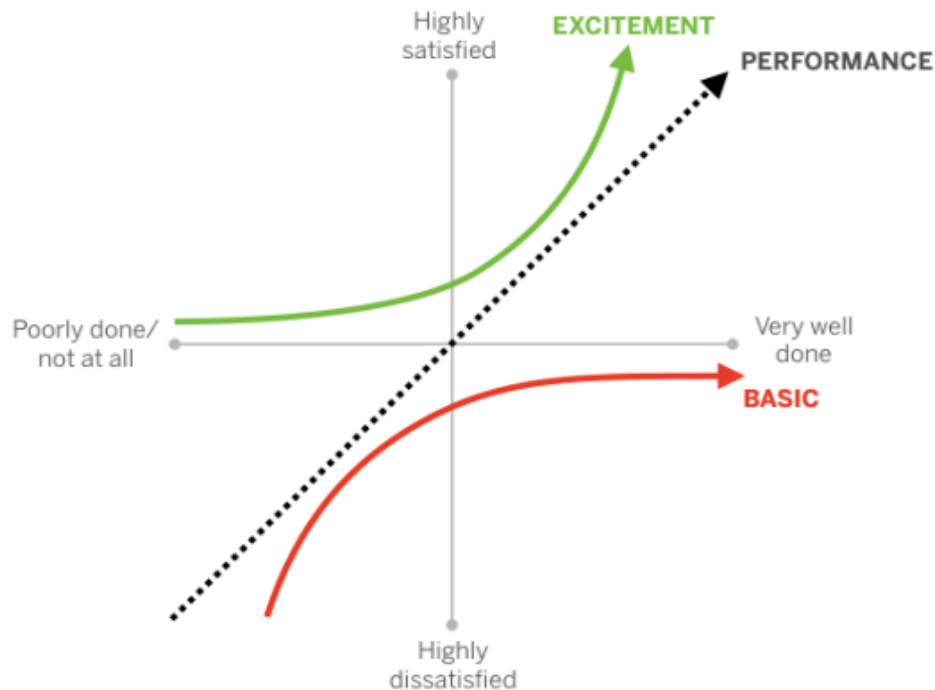
### **2.1.2 Creating customer satisfaction**

Basically a company can create customer satisfaction in many ways such as providing customer good quality of products and services, meeting customer expectation, creating communications.

#### **2.1.2.1 Meeting customer expectation**

Creating customer satisfaction by meeting their expectation has played as the initial and important role in company. Kano pointed out that there was 3 types of customer

needs (Hill et al. 2007, 328). From Kano model, it is possible to estimate what level customers are satisfied.



GRAPH 1. The Kano Model

The must-be requirement is the basic requirement which customers think the product or service must have. If failing to reach to basic needs, customers are totally dissatisfied. (Hill et al. 2007, 328 - 329). The middle level is “more is better” factors which Kano defined as performance requirement. It means that the quality improvement can make a customer more satisfied. The performance has a linear relationship with customer satisfaction (Hill et al. 2007, 329). The attractive requirement is the factor which every company wants to achieve. This can be only gained when a company creates an attractive value to a customer. To do that, a company must differentiate itself from its competitors. The bigger the surprise is, the higher the satisfaction level is.

By a truly touch on customer emotions by knowing customer previous experience, a company can gain customer satisfaction by providing them better choices. The idea is

that a company evaluates the strengths as well as weaknesses of its competitors and then instead of competing with the strengths of competitors, it is easier to see the competitor's weaknesses and make better improvement than competitors. When a customer experienced the disappointed services from a competitor then come to us, they will be delighted to discover that we provide them better choices.

Besides, price is one of the elements in the marketing mix. It can raise customer expectation or lower them (you get what you pay for). Setting a right price will reinforce customer purchasing and make them satisfied. If setting a price too low, a company accidentally devalues its service to customer. However if the price is too high, no one wants to buy. Therefore, setting a price is an issue of sending a right message to customer and an evidence for them to evaluate intangible service. (Berry & Parasuraman 1991, 101-104.)

#### **2.1.2.2 Providing a high quality of services**

A company can maximize the quality of services to make customers happier. There are 10 determinants of service quality in Servqual (Service quality) concepts identified by Parasuraman. Below are more specific explanations and examples with some reference from Thijs & Staes 2008, 20.

- *Access*: It means that services should be easy to approach. For instance, with Actilife membership card, customers can easily have access to the gym premise because this magnet card can be seen as a key door also.
- *Communication*: Speaking and listening to customers in order to provide the information to them.
- *Competence*: To provide service, employees should have good skill and knowledge such as skillful and professional instructors.

- *Courtesy*: Staff should be polite, friendly and respectful to customer. “Hello”, “thank you” and “welcome back” are the most popular greetings to develop a communication.
- *Credibility*: It concerns to trust-worthy and honesty. When depositing a large amount of money, customer expect that the partner is trust-worthy
- *Reliability*: It involves to consistent, accurate and dependent performance.
- *Responsiveness*: it involves to service in a quickly response. For example, a feedback from customer should be solved as soon as possible.
- *Security*: It stands for physical security, financial security or any kinds of confidential information. For instance, gym exercisers want to use safe and secure equipment.
- *Tangibles*: service is intangible but it has several tangible clues such as facilities, equipment. A gym center can satisfy a customer by up-to-date fitness equipments, skillful instructors, etc.
- *Understanding* customers to provide them a better quality. Customer satisfaction can be gained when really understood them.

### **2.1.2.3 Creating communications**

Communication is one of the important factors to create customer satisfaction. The communication comes from the company and its interest groups. It can be advertising, customer word-of-mouth communication, personal selling, interaction between staff and customers, etc. (Berry & Parasuraman 1991, 98-101.)

Storytelling and word of mouth communication refers to the information about services customer get from others. They can search information by asking experience customers who are their family members or friends. (Rueangthanakiet, 2008) There is a saying from Paddi Lund “Even those deaf to the bragging cries of the marketplace will listen to a friend” (Silverman 2001, 23). Word of mouth is usually negative because people likely tell others about negative experience rather than positive ones.

According to many studies, satisfied customers tell around three people while dissatisfied customers tell approximately eleven people. Positive things are usually soon forgotten. It is experienced delivery; therefore lack of positive experience with a company image can lost current and potential customers. (Silverman 2001, 23-29). Therefore, a company should pay attention carefully to create positive word of mouth communication to its interest group.

### ***2.1.3 Measuring customer satisfaction***

If customer satisfaction cannot be measured, it cannot be managed. Using the right methods to measuring customer satisfaction is the way a company should do.

There are many kinds of research methods however it is very important for a company to choose the appropriate methods. There is no concept for the best method among the variety of methods but depending on the situation of research, some measurement methods fit the purpose better than others. (Thijs & Staes 2008, 45)

Again as mentioned about qualitative and quantitative research, both of them are usually used when analyzing customer satisfaction. Quantitative data gives a company an overall view of customer satisfaction while qualitative data provides a huge and diversified amount of information of customer expression and emotion.

### ***2.1.4 Managing customer satisfaction***

Knowing customer satisfaction is not enough but also improving and managing is needed. Managing customer satisfaction has to deal with managing not only products and/or services but also customer perceptions and expectations. (Thijs & Staes 2008, 27)

#### **2.1.4.1 Dealing with customer feedbacks**

Communicating to deal with customer feedback and complaints is not an easy task. By managing customer complaints in an excellent and pleasant way, hopefully a company can turn its disappointed customers in to satisfied customers. If a company cannot manage well with customer complaints, the disadvantage effects of storytelling and word of mouth communication will kill the company's reputation and image. The initial rule is that a customer is always right. The second rule is that if the customer is wrong; look back to the first rule. Therefore, instead of having a controversial debate with customers, a company should communicate humbly. Listen to customer complaints then apologize for making a customer disappointed. Explain him or do something to make him satisfied. Never forget to say thank you to a customer because his complaints and feedback help the company to improve service in future as well.

#### **2.1.4.2 Organizational and service improvement**

In terms of organization improvement, a company should always strengthen its purpose to customer value, keep promises as stated. In addition, a company should manage well its human resources.

Knowing customers' satisfaction to service provided by a company does not mean that the company can ignore and relax. In the world of competition, an erring minute can cause a company to fall behind competitors. The constant development and improvement can maximize customer satisfaction.

## **2.2 Services**

Service differs mainly from product by its non-physical nature. If product marketers create the abstract association impressively, on the other hand, service marketers focus on enhancing through tangible clues of service. (Berry & Parasuraman 1991, 93-94.)

### ***2.2.1 Definition and Characteristics of Service***

During Henry Ford's days, customers are mostly interested in good accumulation. However today the shift moves to where value is linked with productivity (Barcet & Bonamy. 1988). For example, food in the restaurant should be delicious, however, the decoration and atmosphere should be cozy, comfortable and glamorous; waitress must be polite and friendly, etc. In this part, the definition of service and its characteristics is briefly explained

#### **2.2.1.1 Service's Definition**

What is service? Buying clothes in shop and buying insurance can be seen as two typical examples to distinguish product and service. When we buy clothes, we can see, touch and even try them so it is easily to evaluate. In the other hand, we cannot see or touch insurance so it is difficult to measure. For instance, we buy car insurance but do not really know its effect until our car encounter problems.

Shoatack, an American thinker said that while a product can be self-defined due to its physical nature, a service cannot. Customers cannot see a service but they can see various tangible clues linked to services such as services facilities, equipment, employees, communication, prices, etc. (Berry & Parasuraman 1991, 93.) For example, when a customer would like to buy a gym coupon in a fitness center, he can

evaluate the gym services through gym equipment, price or mouth to mouth communication. Those tangible clues are the basic ideas for a customer to choose an alternative since it is so hard for him to evaluate a service. One cannot imagine fully those clues' strengths. If a company can manage those clues well, more customers engage themselves to the company. If not, the company may lose not only its customers but also its image.

### **2.2.1.2 Service Characteristics**

The differences between goods and services are not completely black and white however it is usually difficult to measure services. In general, there are four main different characteristics of services which distinguish from product; they are intangible, simultaneous production and consumption, heterogeneity and perishability (Zeithaml et al. 2006, 21-24.)

#### ***Intangible***

Intangibility is the main characteristic of a service which differs it from a product. Repeating that one cannot see, feel, taste or touch in the same manner one does with physical product. To measure service, customers usually look at the evidence of tangible clues. For instance, in a beauty salon, a customer can check the decoration of spaces, beauty products as well as professional skills of consultants.

#### ***Simultaneous production and consumption***

While most goods are produced first then sold and consumed, most services are sold first and then produced and consumed simultaneously. For example, a cellphone can be manufactured in Finland, shipped to Germany and sold one month later and consumed for over few years. However, an airline ticket provided when firstly sold, then produced and consumed at the same time.



***Heterogeneity (or Variability)***

A service is unique because it produced and consumed simultaneously and different people have different kinds of services. The first time you are in a restaurant is normally different compared to the second time you are there, such as different experience, different way of serving or food taste.

***Perishability***

It refers to the fact that services cannot be stored, saved, resold or returned. Therefore, a vacant seat in airplane bought today cannot be stored for tomorrow, once you donnot use it, you lost it.

***2.2.2 Fitness Services***

The increasing of living standard is equivalent with its social needs. The demand for health protection and weight losing is rising day by day. Fitness centers can be found all around the world from the municipality owners to the commercial private clubs. A brief view of the history will support the idea of why many customers are interested in fitness today. After discovering how important fitness is on the Finnish market, the main fitness areas are emphasized.

***2.2.2.1 History of Fitness***

Looking back to the dawn of civilization, Confucius under ancient China encouraged people to join in activity. Physical inactivity was linked to some diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. That was why Congfu developed to keep the body in shape which consisted of variety of the movements. In the other hand, during this same period, religious beliefs such as Buddhism and Hinduism in ancient Indian civilization discouraged the development of the body but instead of encouraging the development of mind and spirit. Yoga original from Hinduism in India existed at least

5000 years ago with a series of exercises in physical posture and breathing patterns. (Dalleck & Kravitz)

Under ancient Greek civilization, fitness was highly appreciated with the idealism of physical perfection. Greeks believed that the more development of the body was, the more development of mind too. There was a common saying in that time “exercise for body and music for soul”. (Dalleck & Kravitz)

During the colonial time and the wars, fitness has become the strength of military. Gymnastics as a fitness industry became popular in Europe as a way to improve health and strengths. For example, Hippolyte Triat opened a gymnasium in 1847 in Paris or the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) founded by Sir George Williams in 1844 in England. (Buck 1999)

Nowadays, fitness industry is still a blooming industry. Since high cholesterol and fast food has become more popular and favorable especially among the young group, obesity is a global problem. People go to the gym for not only having a good healthy, getting back in shape, avoiding disease but also for reducing stress.

#### **2.2.2.2 Fitness in Finland**

From teenagers to seniors, a large amount of population has physical fitness routines. *“Every day exercise is a way of life”*. (Nieminen) 94 % of Finns age from 19 to 65 said that they exercised regularly which makes Finland become one of the most physical active among European and in the world. (Jason Skog 2008, 19.) It is estimated that 90 % of Finnish children are interested in sports in which 40 % of them belong to sport clubs. Some 30 % of the Finnish population is cyclists and 75 % of Finnish fitness centers are owned by municipalities. Over 500 000 Finnish people use gyms. (World Trade Press 2010, 14) In spite of temperatures below zero, while British

people often moan not to go out, Finns are still diligent to work-out and run through the forest trails. (Jolley 2004, 1-2.)

If oriental martial arts trend became popular in the 1970s, aerobics, body building and gym training became popular in the 1980s. The first women's gymnastics club in Finland as well as in Scandinavia was established in 1867 (Nieminen). While most commercial gyms work independently, some belong to a health club chains. For instance, CMS 'clubs has 36 privately owned centers around Finland. Lady Line is providing 32 gym centers for ladies. Finnbody chain consists of 12 centers. Elixia has nine centers. (<http://www.kuntokeskukset.fi/>)

### **2.2.2.3 Fitness services area**

There are nine dimensional scales of fitness service quality developed by Chang and Chelladurai by doing survey of 350 fitness club customers in the USA (2003)

- (1) Service climate
- (2) Management commitment to service quality
- (3) Programming
- (4) Personal interaction
- (5) Task interaction
- (6) Others clients
- (7) Service failure
- (8) Service recovery
- (9) Perceived service quality

In the researcher's opinion, it is very logical and efficient to develop the quality of a fitness club. Customers want to go to a club which has a pleasant atmosphere, friendly staffs, high interaction between customers and instructors, efficient programs to burn calories. Even when service carried out is a failure, customers can be happier if the service is recovered immediately and improve quickly.

In general, fitness services consist of gym equipment, exercise classes, personal training and other services such as sauna, spa, etc. The better fitness services providing there is usually in direct ratio with the happiness of the customer.

### ***Gym equipment***

Gym equipment include various machines of cardio and strength training. Cardio area includes many types such as rowing machines, stationary exercise bikes, elliptical trainers and treadmills. In cardio area, audio-visual displays are attached into the equipment or placed on walls around the area in order to keep customer entertain during long work-out time. Strength equipment can be free-weight and weight machines. Free weight has many different sizes and weights. People prefer free weight to weight machines; however, weight machines are safer and easier to use. There can be a variety of equipment designed for arms, shoulders, abdomen, back, legs, etc.

### ***Exercise classes***

Exercise classes are one of the attracting services to keep customer loyalty. The more various classes offered, the more interested the customers are. They can be Lesmills, Spin, Belly dance, Zumba, Pilates, Yoga, Aerobics, etc. The main advantage of group exercise is that there is a better interaction between instructors and exercisers as well as among exercisers.

### ***Personal training***

Most fitness clubs have personal trainers who customize appropriate exercise for customers and give advice in nutrition packages. They help customer to achieve the purposes and usually the paying fee to personal training services is quite high.

### ***Other services***

Gym and exercise classes are the main services in fitness center. However, other services also enhance the competitive advantages of center. They can be nutrition, spa, sauna, solarium, child-care places or restaurants, etc.

### 3 ACTILIFE FITNESS CENTER – KOKKOLA

Actilife Fitness Center located in central Kokkola has been existed for 8 years. With top modern technology from Finland and USA as well as skillful instructors, this center would like to bring customers joy, energy and good feeling.

#### 3.1 Overview of Actilife Fitness Center

Actilife Fitness Center was established in 2003 at a small place of downtown Kokkola by Hur Oy, a fitness equipment manufacturer. Actilife has become a “*testing place*” for Hur to continuously develop products as well as customer feedback research. From exercisers’ feedbacks, they can improve Hur equipment for developing better quality of products and retaining customer satisfaction.

By growing in the amount of members, in May 2009 Actilife changed the location to Heinolankaari 12 in a larger premise for everybody and to Pitkänsillankatu 12 for ladies only.



*Gym equipment* are manufactured by Hur Health & Fitness Equipment Company. They have both kinds of free weight and weight machines. As can be seen from GRAPH 2, the gym in Actilife is divided in three areas; they are weight training, cardio and free weight areas. In the smart zone area, equipment are placed in numerical order.

GRAPH 2. Gym equipment

*Exercise classes* can be considered as the strengths of Actilife. We offer exercisers over 20 classes such as Spin, LesMills (BodyPump, BodyCombat, BodyAttack, BodyStep), Zumba, Pilates, Yoga, etc. Some of classes have several instructors in order to give customers more enjoyable experiences.



GRAPH 3. Actilife Exercise Classes

Personal trainer will design appropriately for customers a fitness exercise to burn calories as well as give advice in nutrition package, keep in touch and encourage customers.

Other services: Sauna and shower are offered free of charge. Besides, there is a Tanita BC-418 Body Composition Monitor which helps customer measure muscle mass and fat percentage. A solarium is also included in the services. Also some nutrition for diet and recovery after exercise such as Dietmix, Hera 80, Profx are offered.

### **3.2 Actilife's SWOT analysis**

A SWOT analysis is an important key for a company to audit its business position in a specific market. The organization can attempt to exploit strengths, overcome weaknesses, grasp opportunities and defend itself against threats. (John 2006, 27.)

It is valuable for Actilife to find out what the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Things cannot be managed well if a company does not

know what the company has or which is still missing. By analyzing a SWOT, Actilife can have a better view of the company's present position in the market.

### 3.2.1 Strengths

First of all, the competitive advantage is modern technology which is not only applied in gym equipment but also in a magnet card.

Almost all gym equipment is manufactured by Hur Oy based on air pressure technology. A customer can adjust the weights as well as work-out times by pressing the automatic screen which is attached in these equipments. One can exercise with



or without a HUR's Smart Card. This card is easy to use and efficient to help members improve the health progress. Once the programme has been selected and the card inserted into the machine, levels of resistance and the numbers of repetitions are set automatically. When the target level has been achieved the software updates the programme providing progression to deliver continuing results ([www.Hur.fi](http://www.Hur.fi))

GRAPH 4. HUR's Smart Card

Beside a membership card, there is a magnet card which is convenient and beneficial for both customer members and company management. A customer can use this card as a key for opening Actilife premises as well as checking the attendance at the reception desk by scanning the card via computer supplement and then choosing programmes or classes one would like to participate. Thanks to the innovative

invention of Hur Oy for the membership card, members are more flexible with their time. They can access premise from 6 to 22.30 in Actilife Heinolankaari and from 6 to 21.30 in Actilife Lady. Besides, Actilife Fitness Center also gets a lot of advantages from the membership card. In the past, every time when customers came, the receptionists needed to check customers' names on the paper. It means receptionists should be available at the front desk from the opening hour until closing hour. Nowadays, with a magnet card, they do not need to check customers' names on a paper. In term of management, once customer scans the card, the computer will save all customer information such as which time they come, which classes they choose. Therefore, the company can easily check customer's work-out frequency as well as their preference of classes. Furthermore, the company can save workforce costs because they do not need many receptionists.

Secondly, diversified classes are an advantage as well. Actilife provides over 20 exercise classes in different areas from encouraging mind and spirit to attempting body movement. Moreover, there are only 2 centers giving Les Mills class in Kokkola area and Actilife is one of them. LesMills are very popular today and available in over 100 countries around the world. Also Zumba can be considered as strength because many customers choose Zumba classes.

In addition, there is also a separate location for ladies room which is decorated by luxury golden-color equipment coverage. Therefore, women can work-out in both locations of Actilife, at Heinolankaari and Actilife Lady. Furthermore, the car park in Heinolankaari is free of charge. There are lots of parking places which are seldom full. Customers do not need to pay to a car park while they usually have to pay around two Euros for parking in the downtown center.



### **3.2.2 Weaknesses**

Location can be inconvenient for those people who have no car or live far from Heinolankaari. Especially in winter time, it could be problem for them to reach to the center.

### **3.2.3 Opportunities**

In future, Hur Oy may expand Actilife to vicinities. With a key card, Actilife would love to bring in customer more flexible and independent on time. The location in Heinolankaari is a big area so that Actilife can offer variety of gym equipment and exercise classes.

With the skillful instructors, up-to-date and constant development of the gym, it could be a good chance for Actilife to gain more market share if it can offer customers various classes and excellent gym solutions. A near future goal is that Actilife want to attract more elders in the day time from 9am to 3pm.

### **3.2.4 Threats**

Even in Kokkola a small population market, Actilife has many competitors. Some are quite strong and have several club chains such as Lady Line chain consists of 34 centers for women, Finnbody chain has 12 centers plus 4 lady clubs including 2 blowing centers in Kokkola and Tikkurila. So Hur Oy truly sees that the competitors are very well-known brands in many different cities. To compete with them, they have to invest in modern technology machines as well as customer satisfaction.

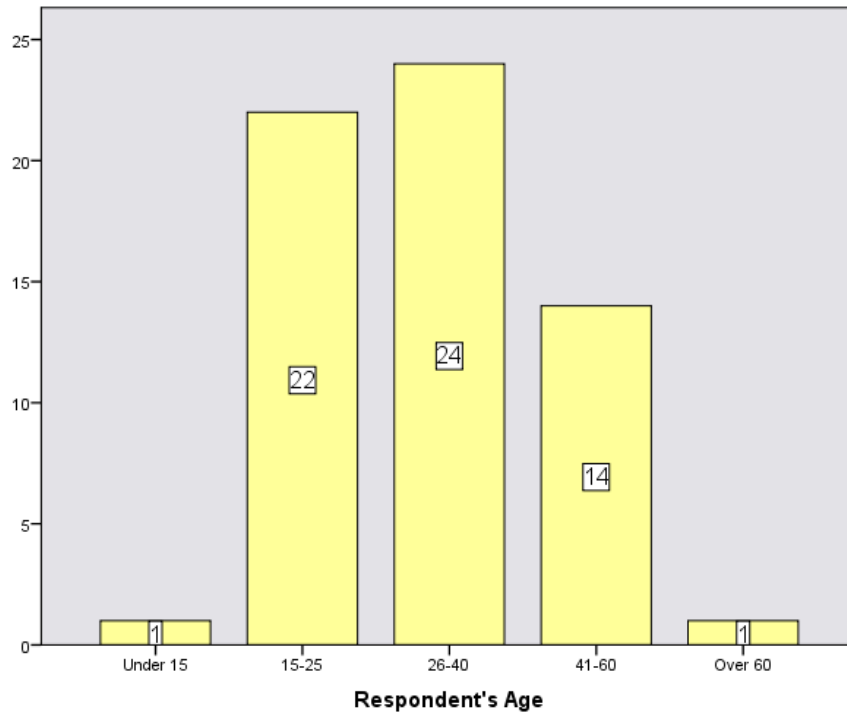
Furthermore, changing customer tastes should be considered as a threat. Fitness services are somehow the same as clothing styles. In different period of time, there is

different popular kind of exercise. For example, nowadays some people are interested in ballet anymore; they prefer some exercise with more movements, lively and popular trend.

#### 4 ANALYZING RESEARCH FINDINGS

The questionnaire is conducted in 9 main questions plus 2 extra background information involved in age and gender. The first three questions examined Actilife's membership; via sources they get information about Actilife and the reason they choose Actilife. Then, two continuing questions ask customers how long and how often they have been working-out in Actilife. Question 6 divided into three parts with a scale from extreme dissatisfaction to extreme satisfaction in order to measure customer satisfaction for Actilife services and classes in both Actilife Heinolankaari and Actilife Lady. Then the two next questions are open questions which customers can freely express their ideas to services improved or added. Last question is for Actilife membership card owners only which Actilife wants to know whether they are satisfied with benefits providing by Actilife or not, and what benefits they would like to get in future as well.

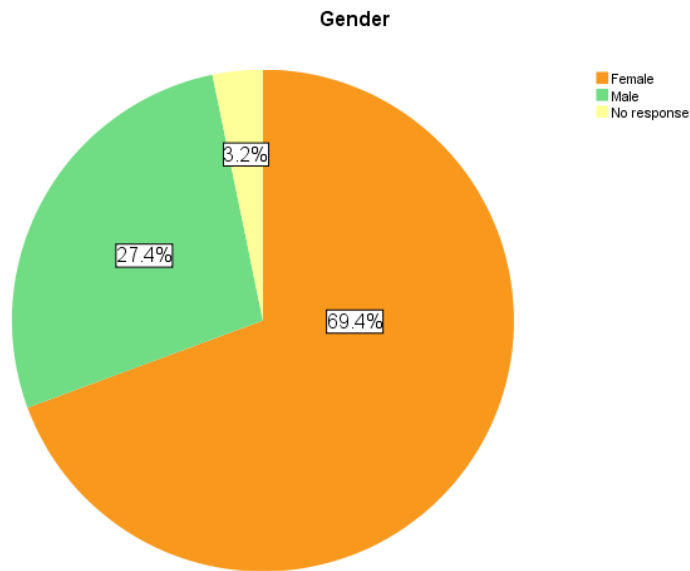
***The first two background information*** focus on the age and gender of the respondents. The reason for asking the respondents' age category is to know which age group is mostly interested in Actilife's services. The group of people from 15 to 25 are young generation, they are students and easy to access to advertising and media. The group of people from 26 to 40 seems to be a group of the most interesting in gym service because of many reasons such as getting back in shape, having enough power for working life. From 40 to 60 is a group of senior which Hur company has been targeted.



GRAPH 5. Respondent's Age

The graph 5 above shows that the group of 26 to 40 is the highest group respondents which hold 24 responses. The second highest age group respondents belong to group of 15 to 25 which hold 22 responses. Some 14 people identified themselves in the age group of 41 to 60. In fact there is only 1 respondent each that belong to the age group of under 15 as well as over 60. It seems to be that the middle age group is the most interested group in Actilife. It is quite understandable because respondents in this group are facing too many health problems such as not having enough energy for a busy working life or especially for women after giving birth need to get back in shape quickly. Actilife also associated well with the young generation.

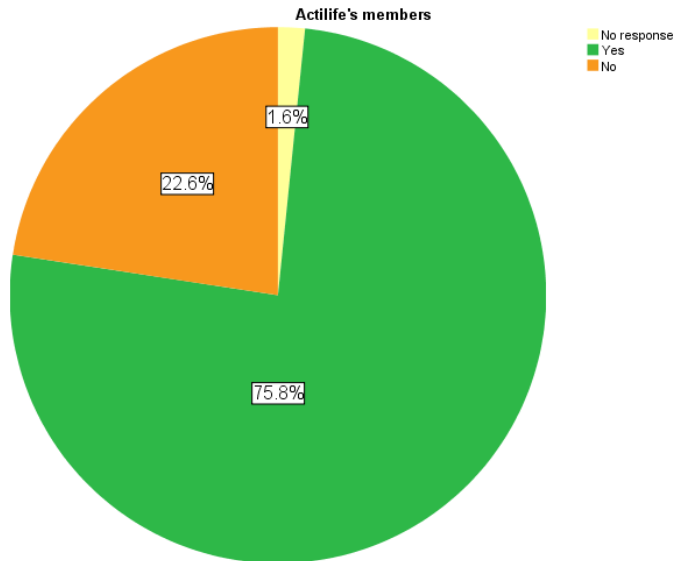
Then the other extra question focuses on customer's gender to figure out which gender is more interested in Actilife's services.



GRAPH 6. Respondent's Gender

The graph 6 above shows that 69.4 % of respondents are female while 27.4 % are male. Within 62 customers, we can see that the amount of female customer is two and a half times bigger than the amount of male customers. The reason can be obviously seen that Actilife offers a lot of classes for female than male exercisers. Also men are almost interested in gymwhile women prefer exercise classes.

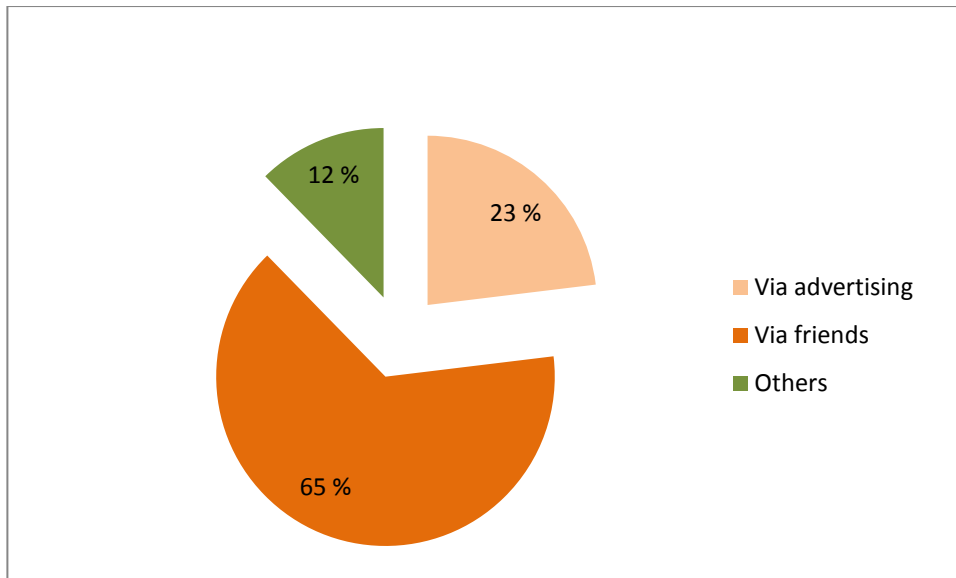
**Question one** examined whether respondents are Actilife members or not. It is very important to know the respondents' membership because Actilife would like to encourage people to buy a membership card. Since customers decide to buy a membership card, they somehow believe in our services as well as intend to stay longer with us.



GRAPH 7. Actilife's membership

As can easily be recognized from graph 7, 75.8 % of the respondents contribute to Actilife members which are three times greater to non-membership respondents. It is a good result for Actilife. Once customers become Actilife member, they are offered a lot of benefits such as having a magnet card to access the premise, receiving Actilife membership card promotions for restaurant, clothing discount in some specific places or having a right to make a class reservation online, etc.

**Question two** focuses on the sources of Actilife information respondents got from in order to find out which way of communication is most effective. Customers can find Actilife from various sources such as advertising, friends, accidentally seeing the premise by passing through, etc. However, to know which communication is rapidly reached by customers, Actilife can put more efforts on gaining more and more potential customers.

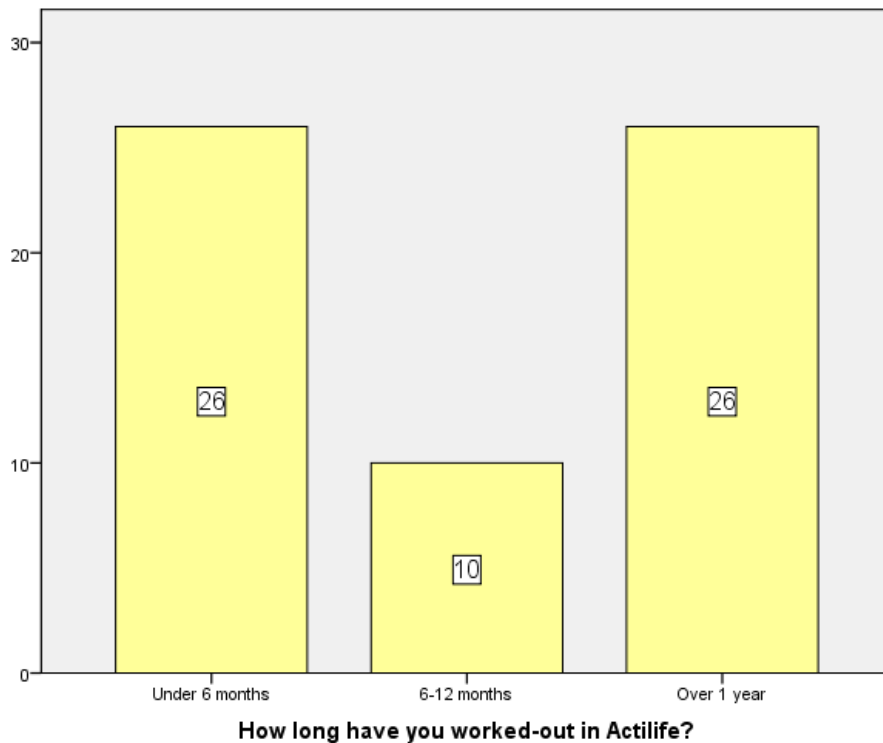


GRAPH 8. Sources of knowing Actilife information

Group 8 points out that 65 % of respondents know Actilife via friends. Looking back to the theoretical knowledge, the mouth to mouth communication is probably strong in this case. Some 23 % of respondents know Actilife via advertising and a majority of them belongs to young group from 15 to 25 years old. 12 % of respondents get the information by other sources such as work place recommended, via their husbands or girlfriends. For those responses to work placement recommendation, it is success and positive feedback to Actilife promotion campaign for entrepreneurs and businesses. Therefore, workplace recommendation can be considered as advertising. Besides, with those answers through their spouse or girlfriends, they can be listed in word of mouth communication. In general, there are mostly two kinds of communications involved in the question. Therefore, presently Actilife is successful in term of marketing to customers.

**Question three** indicates for the question of why the respondents choose Actilife. It can point out what are the strengths of Actilife services. This question is in private use!

**Question four** asks about how long customers have been working-out in Actilife. The purpose is to see how many respondents belong to the third group of over 1 year work-out in Actilife. It somehow associates to customer choice and loyalty.

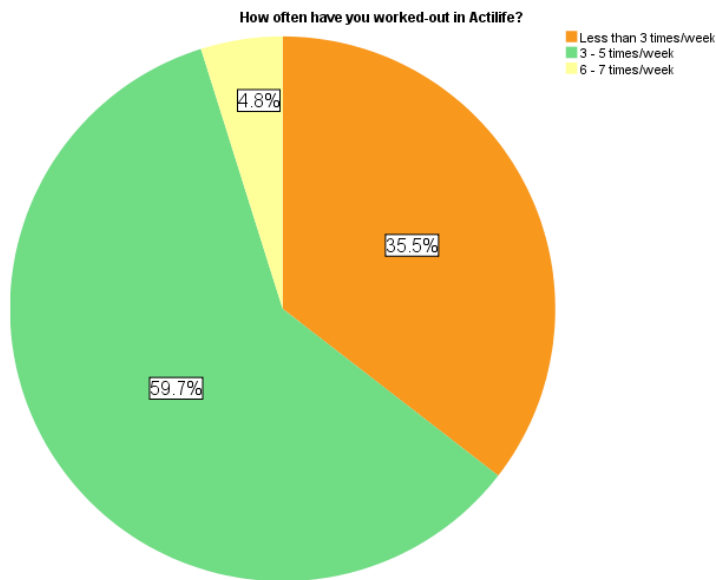


GRAPH 10. The duration of working-out in Actilife

Graph 10 illustrates the duration of working-out of the respondents in Actilife. Totally 26 respondents which hold 42 % have contributed to the duration of over 1 year. This figure shows a good sign that Actilife has a huge amount of loyalty customers. Those are the most valuable and cost savings customers. Another 42 % of respondents contribute to the duration of working out less than 6 month. Therefore this group should be invested more to satisfy and turn them into loyalty customers.

**Question five** focuses on the respondents' work-out frequency. The work-out frequency depends on customers' decisions but somehow a part of it can link to how pleased they are with Actilife services. Pleased customer will come more often.





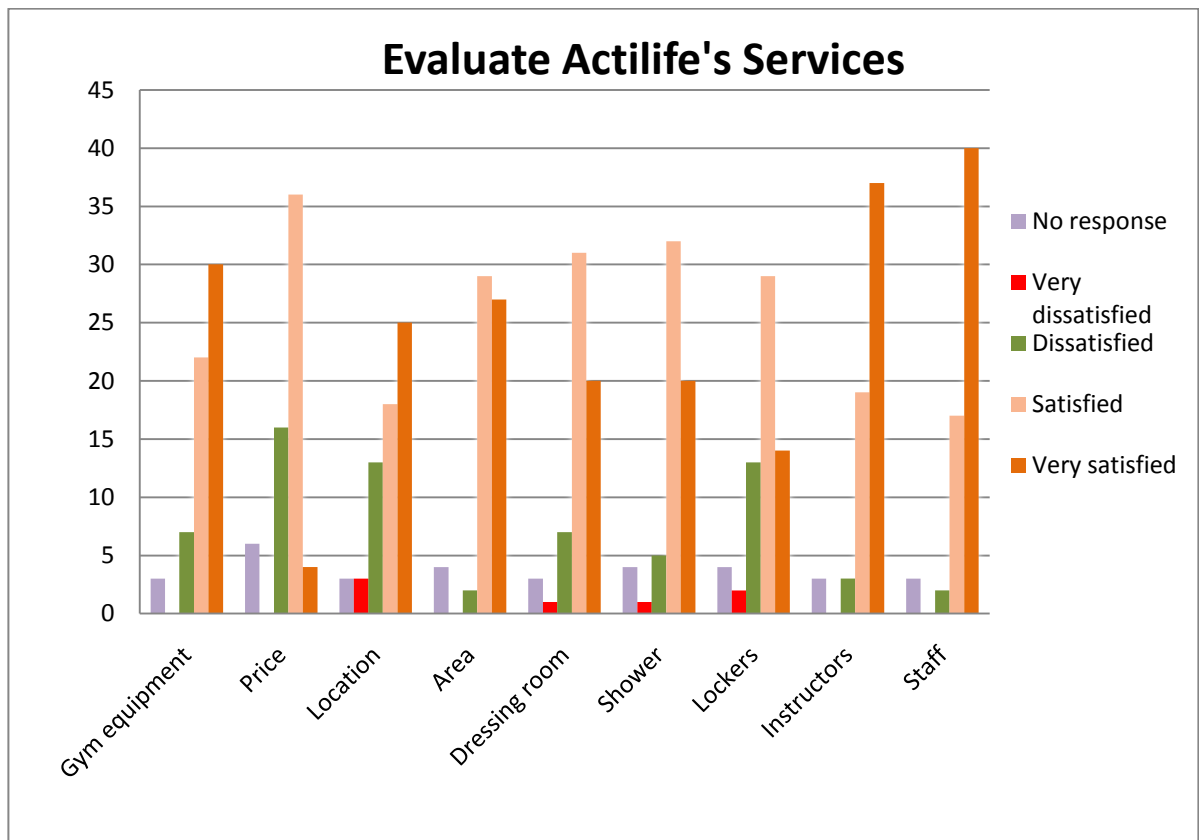
GRAPH 11. Work-out frequency in Actilife

From Graph 11 there are 36 % of them who work-out less than 3 times per week while nearly 60 % of the respondents went to Actilife from 3 to 5 times per week. A small amount of respondents say that they can work-out every day in Actilife. However, the amount of respondents work out in the center over 3 times per week is 65 % (59.7 % + 4.8 %). It somehow shows that they likely come and enjoy in the services.

**Question six** obviously focuses on the main topic of customer satisfaction. The quantitative method is used to find out to what extent the respondents are satisfied in Actilife services. There is a point scale from 1 to 4 which refers from the extremely dissatisfied level to the extremely satisfied level. Specifically, 1 means “very dissatisfied”, 2 defines “dissatisfied”, 3 indicates “satisfied” and 4 illustrates “very satisfied”. The reason for not choosing a middle level between satisfied and dissatisfied level such as so-so because it gets harder and is harder to interpret what customers think about if they just tick so-so. The question is divided in three parts. The purpose of part A. is to know at what level a customer is satisfied with general

information involved in Actilife. Part B. is to evaluate the classes in Actilife Heinolankaari while part C. is to measure how satisfied customers are in Actilife Lady's classes.

Firstly, **part A.** is about evaluating the general things such as gym equipment, diversified classes, price, location, area, dressing room, shower, lockers, instructors and Actilife staff.



GRAPH 12. Evaluate Actilife's Services

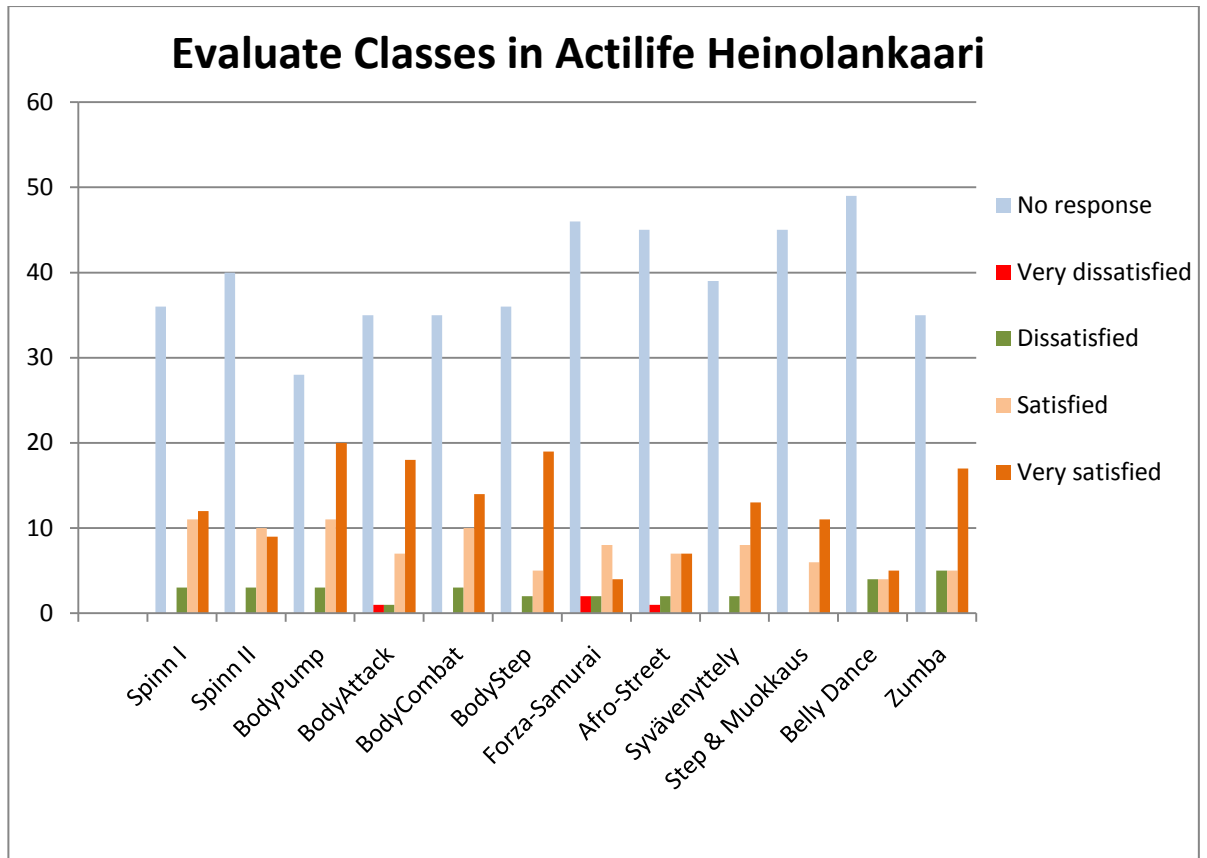
TABLE 1. Evaluate Actilife's Services

Criteria	No response (0)	Very dissatisfied (1)	Dissatisfied (2)	Satisfied (3)	Very satisfied (4)	Under satisfied (1) + (2)	Satisfied or more (3) + (4)
Gym equipment	3	0	7	22	30	7	52
Price	6	0	16	36	4	16	40

Location	3	3	13	18	25	16	43
Area	4	0	2	29	27	2	56
Dressing room	3	1	7	31	20	8	51
Shower	4	1	5	32	20	6	52
Lockers	4	2	13	29	14	15	43
Instructors	3	0	3	19	37	3	56
Staff	3	0	2	17	40	2	57

In Graph 12 with the reference from table 1, dark orange and light orange colors represent customers extremely satisfaction and fair satisfaction. It is very pleasant to see that respondents are satisfied with Actilife. Most of them are very satisfied to Actilife staff, instructors and gym equipment which hold 40, 37 and 30 responses respectively. Considering myself as a customer in Actilife as well as observing the staff working, it is easy to understand why most of respondents are extremely satisfied with the staff. Actilife has a very friendly, professional and skillful staff. Almost all staff members are instructors so they can give customers useful advices. Every time a customer in or out, they never forgot to say greetings and salutations to them as well as creating the conversation with customers. Communication is really a successful secret factor to gain customer satisfaction. Beside that location, atmosphere area, price, dressing room, shower and lockers are also satisfying customer.

**Part B.** is focused on customer satisfaction to classes offered in Actilife Heinolankaari. The main purpose of this part is to find out how far customers are satisfied to specific classes, which classes are typical and favourites among customer choice and which classes Actilife should put more efforts on improving customer satisfaction.



GRAPH 13. Evaluate Classes in Actilife Heinolankaari

TABLE 2. Evaluate Classes in Actilife Heinolankaari

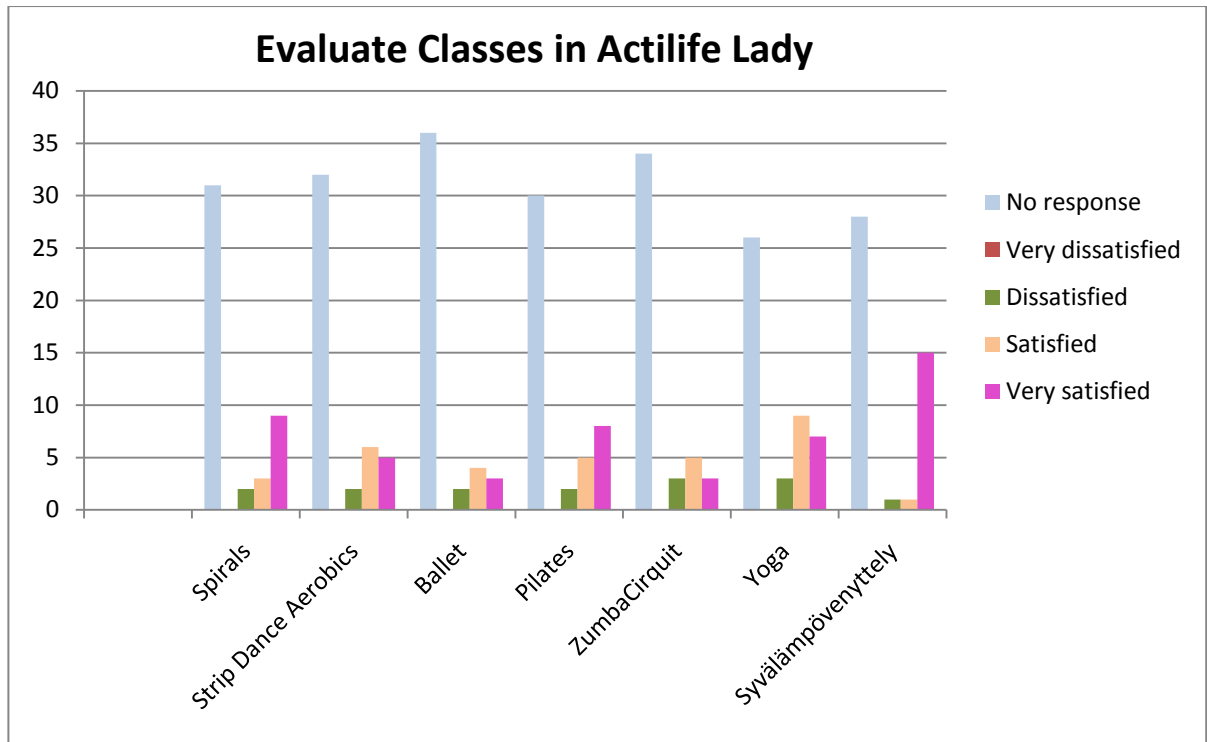
Classes in Heinolankaari	No response (0)	Very dissatisfied (1)	Dissatisfied (2)	Satisfied (3)	Very satisfied (4)	Under satisfied (1) +(2)	Satisfied or more (3) + (4)
Spin I	36	0	3	11	12	3	23
Spin II	40	0	3	10	9	3	19
BodyPump	28	0	3	11	20	3	31
BodyAttack	35	1	1	7	18	2	25
BodyCombat	35	0	3	10	14	3	24
BodyStep	36	0	2	5	19	2	24
Forza-Samurai	46	2	2	8	4	4	12
Afro-Street	45	1	2	7	7	3	14
Syvävenyttely	39	0	2	8	13	2	21
Step & Muokkaus	45	0	0	6	11	0	17
Belly Dance	49	0	4	4	5	4	9
Zumba	35	0	5	5	17	5	22

As can be seen from Graph 13, it is a very high amount of respondents have not answered to all class evaluation. The main reason is that they do not take part in those classes. The no response's figure could be ignored while the other respondents should be taken into account.

Again, dark and light orange color symbolized the satisfaction level are relatively high. LesMills (BodyPump, BodyAttack, BodyCombat, BodyStep), Spin, Zumba and Deep Stretching are among the most favorable classes which each of class hold over 20 respondents' choices. According to Table 2, the most extremely satisfied responses contribute to BodyPump which hold 20 responses. BodyStep become the second most extremely satisfied with 19 choices. BodyAttack and Zumba follow closely with 18 and 17 choices respectively. However, 5 respondents are dissatisfied with Zumba.

Forza-Samurai, Belly dance and Afro-street are not favorable compared to other classes above. Some 49 of 62 respondents have not taken part or evaluated belly dance. 4 respondents are also not satisfied with belly dance class while 2 respondents are extremely disappointed to Forza-Samurai. Those classes should be improved so that in the future, there are more members interested in them. However, it also depends too much on fitness classes' trend and customers' tastes.

**Part C.** asks customer to evaluate classes in Actilife Lady in order to find out what the most favorable class.



GRAPH 14. Evaluate classes in Actilife Lady

TABLE 3. Evaluate Classes in Actilife Lady

Classes in Actilife Lady	No response (0)	Very dissatisfied (1)	Dissatisfied (2)	Satisfied (3)	Very satisfied (4)	under satisfied (1)+(2)	Satisfied or more (3)+(4)
Spirals	31	0	2	3	9	2	12
Strip Dance Aerobics	32	0	2	6	5	2	11
Ballet	36	0	2	4	3	2	7
Pilates	30	0	2	5	8	2	13
ZumbaCircuit	34	0	3	5	3	3	8
Yoga	26	0	3	9	7	3	16
Syvälämpövenyttely	28	0	1	1	15	1	16

Again, the figure of no response can be neglected. It is nice to see that in many classes, there is no respondent extremely dissatisfied to classes provided. Yoga and Syvälämpövenyttely have pleased customers with 16 respondents for each respectively. Especially, 15 respondents are very satisfied with Syvälämpövenyttely

class. Respondents are satisfied with Pilates, Spirals, Strip-dance aerobics classes which hold 13, 12 and 11 responses respectively.

Ballet and ZumbaCircuit do not have many choices from respondents. Only 8 of them are satisfied and very satisfied with ZumbaCircuit while only 7 are with Ballet. The reason why there is less choice to Ballet is quite understandable because not many people are interested in this classes, they would like some class with quick and strong movement rather than hard and slow one.

**Question 7** is an open question in which Actilife would like to know which services should be improved in customers' point of view. Some 43 respondents said there is no need to improve or say anything. Therefore, nearly 70 % of customers are satisfied with the current services without adjustment. Only 19 respondents say that we should improve services in Actilife. However those recommendations are only kept for private use of Actilife.

**Question 8** is also an open question to know which services should be added in Actilife. Totally 50 respondents say nothing or say that no need to add which contribute to 80 % of the respondents. Another 12 respondents recommend that Actilife should add more services which can be listed as below:

- More courses such as basic aerobics which programme is made by instructors themselves, more short class for Zumba 10x, martial arts, running or muscle training for runners, group of over 50 for elder
- Gym: shoulder muscle equipment, gym should open for everyone on Saturday
- Other services: 4 respondents highly recommend we should have a children place.

**Question 9** is only for Actilife membership card owners. 14 are non-member so they do not answer. Totally 37 respondents are satisfied with benefits of membership card while 3 people said they do not know or do not have time to know more about membership benefit yet. The other 8 respondents want Actilife to offer more events. One of the satisfied membership mentions that cooperation with Polarn O. Pyret and Intersport is very fantastic.



## 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

According to the survey, the amount of female respondents is more two and a half times than male respondents. The highest respondents belong to group age of 26 to 40 years old. 76 % of the respondents are Actilife members. Totally 65% of the respondents know Actilife via friends while other 23 % know us via advertising. The biggest reason customers choose Actilife is diversified classes which holds 42 %. Around 60 % of respondents work-out in Actilife from 3 to 5 times per week.

The respondents are mostly pleased with staff which contributes 57 “satisfied” and “very satisfied” responses. Instructors and area (comfortable, cozy atmosphere) come to the second position which holds 56 “satisfied” and “very satisfied” responses each respectively.

From the result evaluation of classes, LesMills classes (BodyPump, BodyStep, BodyAttack and BodyCombat) are among the most favorable classes based on respondents choices, especially in BodyPump, 31 respondents are satisfied and extremely satisfied. In lady room, Syvälämpövenyttely, Yoga, Pilates, Spirals and Strip-dance are among the popular classes. In general, customers are satisfied with exercise classes.

It is nice to hear that the huge amount of response satisfied with Actilife services. 43 respondents which hold nearly 70 % do not complain about improving services. Besides, 50 respondents which contribute to 80 % of the total respondents do not mention to add more services in Actilife. The others recommend that Actilife should have a children place, more courses providing.

Last but not least, for membership card holder, 77 % of Actilife members are satisfied with the membership benefits. However, many of them recommend that Actilife should organize more events so that they can be together and have fun.

In conclusion, customers are generally satisfied with services offered by Actilife Fitness Center. Actilife should put more effort on communication with customers, especially word of mouth communication because over 65 % of respondents know Actilife by friends' recommendation. Staff should continue the same way as 92 % of the respondents are pleased with them. LesMills classes (BodyPump, BodyCombat, BodyStep, BodyAttack), Spin, Zumba, Yoga and Syvälämpövenyttely should keep progress in this way. The children's place should be taken into account in the future as well. Lastly, the center should organize more events for members as well as non-members so that they can tighten an invisible relationship with customer.

Hopefully this research can be a good consideration for Actilife when making the decision as well as managing the customer satisfaction. Finally the researcher would like to cite some respondents' motivations which are preciously valuable to Actilife Fitness Center.

- *Viihtyisät ja asialliset tilat, osaavat ohjaajat.* (pleasant and good premise, skillful instructors)
- *Minusta suunta on oikea. Kehitytte ja kehitätte koko ajan.* (In my opinion, the direction is right. Develop and develop all the time)
- *Jatkakaa samaan malliin!* (Continue the same way)

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## Asiakastytyväisyyskysely

Hyvä Asiakas!

Olen Nguyen Le Huyen, opiskelen liiketaloutta Keski-Pohjanmaan ammattikorkeakoulussa. Nyt minulla on mahdollisuus kirjoittaa opinnäytetyöni Actilife Kuntokeskuksen asiakastytyväisyyden tasosta. Haluaisimme saada Teiltä palautetta parantaaksemme Actilife kuntokeskuksen palveluja sekä maksimoidaksemme asiakastytyväisyyttä

*Ikä:*

- alle 15                       26 – 40                       yli 60 vuotta  
 15 – 25                       41- 60

*Sukupuoli*

- Nainen                       Mies

1. Oletko Actilifen jäsen?

- Kyllä                       Ei

2. Mistä olet saanut tietoa meistä?

- Mainonta kautta                       Muun kautta.....  
 Ystäviän kautta

3. Miksi valitsit meidät?

- Kuntosali                       Sijainti                       Muu syy.....  
 Monipuolinen tarjonta                       Naistensali  
 Hintaa

4. Kuinka kauan olet käynyt Actilife:ssa?

- alle 6 kk                       6 – 12 kk                       yli 1 vuosi

5. Kuinka usein käyt Actilife:ssa?

- alle 3 krt / vko                       3 – 5 krt / vko                       yli 5 krt / vko

6. Rastita  valintasi mukaan. Asteikko on 1-4, missä...

- 1: erittäin tyytymätön  
 2: tyytymätön  
 3: tyytyväinen  
 4: erittäin tyytyväinen

a. Arvioi palvelut Actilife

Perusteet	1	2	3	4	Huomautus (syy, muita ideoita ...)
Kuntosalilaitteet					
Monipuolinen tarjonta					
Hinta					
Sijainti					
Alue (kodikas, mukava ...?)					
Pukuhuoneet					
Suihkut					
Kaapit					
Ohjaajat					
Henkilöstö					

b. Arvioi luokat Actilife Heinolankaarilla

Luokat	1	2	3	4	Huomautus (syy, muita ideoita ...)
Spinn I					
Spinn II					
BodyPump					
BodyAttack					
BodyStep					
BodyCombat					
Forza-Samurai					
Afro-Street					
Syvävenyttely					
Step & Muokkaus					
Vatsatanssi					
Zumba					

c. Arvioi luokat Actilife Lady:ssa

Luokat	1	2	3	4	Huomautus (syy, muita ideoita ...)
Spirals					
Strip dance aerobics					
Baletti					
Pilates					
ZumbaCircuit					
Jooga					
Syvälämpövenyttely					

7. *Mitä olisi parannettava palveluissamme?*

.....  
.....  
.....

8. *Millaisia palveluja haluaisit meidän lisäävän tarjontaamme?*

.....  
.....

9. *Vain Actilifen jäsenkortti omistajille: Oletko tyytyväinen etuuksimme? Millaisia etuuksia haluaisit meidän tarjoavan enemmän?*

.....  
.....

Kiitos vaivannäöstänne! ☺





## Customer Satisfaction Survey

Dear Customer!

I am Nguyen Le Huyen, studying Business Management at Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences. Luckily, I have a chance to write my final thesis for Actilife Kuntokeskus about measuring customer satisfaction level. We would like to get your feedback in order to improve Actilife's gym services as well as maximize customer loyalty.

Your age:

- Under 15                       26 – 40                       Over 60  
 15 – 25                       41- 60

Your gender:

- Female                       Male

10. Are you Actilife's member?

- Yes                       No

11. Where did you get information about us?

- Via advertising                       Others.....  
 Via friends                      ....

12. Why do you choose us?

- Gym                       Lady room                       Others.....  
 Various classes                       Price                      ....  
 Location

13. How long have you worked-out in Actilife?

- Under 6 months                       6 – 12 months                       Over 1 year

14. How often do you work-out in Actilife?

- Less than 3 times / week                       3 – 5 times / week                       6 – 7 times / week

15. Please tick ✓ for your selection, there is scale from 1 to 4:

- 1: very dissatisfied  
 2: dissatisfied  
 3: satisfied  
 4: very satisfied

d. Evaluate Actilife's services

Criteria	1	2	3	4	Note (reason, other ideas...)
Gymnasium equipment					
Diversified classes					
Price					
Location					
Area (cozy, comfortable...?)					
Dressing room					
Shower					
Locker					
Instructors					
Staff					

e. Evaluate classes in Actilife Heinolankaari

Classes	1	2	3	4	Note (reason, other ideas...)
Spinn I					
Spinn II					
BodyPump					
BodyAttack					
BodyStep					
BodyCombat					
Forza-Samurai					
Afro-Street					
Syvävenyttely					
Step & Muokkaus					
Belly dance					
Zumba					

f. Evaluate classes in Actilife Lady

Classes	1	2	3	4	Note (reason, other ideas...)
Spirals					
Strip dance aerobics					
Ballet					
Pilates					
ZumbaCircuit					
Yoga					
Syvälämpövenyttely					

16. *What should be improved in our service?*

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.....  
.....

17. *What kind of services do you want us to add in?*

.....  
.....

18. Only for Actilife's membership card owner: *Are you satisfied with our benefits? What kind of benefits would you like us to offer more?*

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Thank you for your precious time ☺