

DETERMINATION OF INTERNAL SERVICE QUALITY IN A SPORT ORGANIZATION: THE CASE OF "KAUNAS ŽALGIRIS" FOOTBALL CLUB

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ABSTRACT

The internal service quality in an organization is a particularly important factor that determines not only the internal users (employee) satisfaction, but also their loyalty to the organization and their performance. The aim of the study is to determine the internal service quality in "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club. Methods: A qualitative methodological approach, semi-structured indepth interviews (non-probabilistic targeting). The study showed that different recipients of internal services receive services of different quality. Coaches, men's football team players, administration and service staff receive the highest quality internal services. The lowest quality internal services are received by those who do not generate income for the club - women's and youth football teams. The club should ensure that all resources are available to all football teams belonging to the club. Although "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club has created an entire pyramid for the education of young footballers, it faces a lack of loyalty from them due to quality problems of internal services provided. It is recommended that "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club solve the problems of internal service quality and develop a

strategy aimed at promoting the loyalty and pride of youth teams in belonging to "Kaunas Žalgiris" organization.

Keywords: *Internal service quality; Service; Quality*

1. INTRODUCTION

Businesses and various organizations are constantly faced with a variety of challenges (Simanavicius et al., 2021). In today's business world, one of the biggest challenges is customer retention. Increasing competition for more consumers has led companies to discover or add value to the services they provide in order to differentiate themselves from competitors (Tsitskari, et al., 2006). Also in sports organizations, where quality improvement is an ongoing process, service development decisions are largely driven by consumers. In a sports organization, all processes must take place in such a way that the requirements of consumers are best met and their expectations are exceeded (Šimkus & Pilelienė, 2010).

Most research that has sought to assess the quality of services provided focuses on assessing the quality of an organization's / institution's services from the perspective of external users / customers. Significantly less attention was paid to the internal quality of services in the organization - the quality of services received by the internal users / employees of the organization (Jun & Cai, 2010; Stanley & Wisner, 2001; Kuei, 1999). Today, researchers are already paying more attention to the internal service quality due to its significant impact on the quality of external services, the growth and profitability of the organization or company (Pasebani et al., 2012).

The internal quality of services in an organization is a particularly important factor that determines not only the internal users t. y. employee satisfaction (Pasebani et al., 2012; Calabuig-Moreno et al., 2016), but also their loyalty to the organization (Hammond, 2003, Avourdiadou & Theodorakis, 2014, Howat & Assaker, 2013). According to researchers (Singh, 2016; Almohaimmed, 2019), the quality of internal services is positively correlated with performance, so organizations need to develop an internal customer (employee) service orientation in order to provide quality services to their external customers (McDermott & Emerson, 1991). To ensure high external customer satisfaction, organizations need to identify, evaluate, and manage the internal elements that create it (Hallowell, Schlesinger & Zornitsky, 1996).

Most of the internal service quality studies conducted in organizations are quantitative in order to confirm or refute the hypotheses raised and to generalize the obtained results (Almohaimmed, 2019). In the absence of detailed qualitative research, a study of the internal service quality of "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club was conducted.

Research problem: how to properly determine the internal service quality in a sports organization. The aim of the study: to determine the internal service quality in "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

When thinking about the quality of services provided by organizations, the first thought in mind always comes from the quality of service provided to customers by the service organization (Iqbal et al. 2018).

Vassileva and Balloni (2014) argued that the definition of service quality is largely customer-oriented (to the organization's external customers). In reality, however, there are two main types of customers in all organizations: external customers, as well as internal customers - employees of the organization (Almohaimmed, 2019).

Therefore, the quality of services provided by an organization can be divided into two groups: external service quality (ESQ) and internal service quality (ISQ) (Latif, 2016). Latif and Baloch defined the ISQ as the quality of service provided by employees to employees from different divisions of the same organization, and defined the ESQ as the quality of service that an organization provides to its customers.

Finn, Baker, et al. (1996), arguing that one of the principles of Total Quality Management states that every employee should treat other members of the organization with whom they interact as valued customers.

Fadil et al. (2016) defined ISQ as employee satisfaction resulting from their good understanding of the services provided by the organization's internal service providers. Frost and Kumar (2000) conceptualized the ISQ as the difference between the expected and perceived services received by an employee from other employees due to the services provided by their co-workers or support staff.

ISQ is a state of satisfaction that is perceived by an employee as an internal customer of the organization due to the perception of the service received by another employee of the

organization as an internal service provider of the organization. ISQ is related to the skills of employees that allow them to serve internal customers.

Marshall et al. (1998) defined the ISQ as a “two-way exchange process” in which employees, as service providers, offer their services to their colleagues to make them happy and meet their needs (Almohaimmed, 2019).

According to Labanauskaitė and Fominienė (2016), the job satisfaction of an organization's employees is one of the most difficult challenges for any organization that seeks to increase its productivity and efficiency.

There is a positive correlation between the ISQ and job satisfaction. A positive relationship between these two elements has been found in a number of service quality studies: studies of sports organizations in Iran (Pasebani et al., 2012), sports and fitness centers (Calabuig-Moreno et al., 2016; Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020; García-Fernández et al., 2016), inexpensive fitness center (García-Fernández et al., 2018a), sports events (Calabuig-Moreno et al., 2016), public outdoor water centers in Australia (Howat & Assaker, 2013) and other studies (Karatepe, 2011; Dauda et al. 2013).

In addition, according to Labanauskaitė and Fominienė (2016), job satisfaction is an important factor that determines the positive emotional reaction of the employee and the attitude towards the strength of the relationship between the employee and the organization. It should be noted, however, that this state of job satisfaction is not permanent. It can change quickly, so it needs to be strengthened periodically (Labanauskaitė & Fominienė, 2016).

The ISQ in an organization is a particularly important factor that determines not only the internal users (employee) job satisfaction but also their loyalty to the organization (Hammond, 2003; Avourdiadou & Theodorakis, 2014; Howat & Assaker, 2013). According to researchers (Yang et al. 2009; Tsitskari, et al., 2006), customer retention is one of the biggest challenges facing the modern business world.

Numerous studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between service quality, satisfaction, and customer loyalty.

According to Avourdiadou, Theodorakis (2014), accumulated research in the field of sports management has shown that service quality and customer satisfaction are key factors in customer loyalty. The relationship between these factors is confirmed by research conducted

by other researchers (Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020, García-Fernández et al., 2016, Jasinskis et al., 2016).

According to researchers, the loyalty of existing customers is very important, as it has been calculated that attracting new customers is much more expensive than retaining existing ones (Jasinskis et al., 2016).

According to researchers, a satisfied customer tends to share their experience with five or six people, and dissatisfied with even ten (García-Fernández et al., 2018b).

García-Fernández et al. (2018a) found that among the variables used to analyze the relationship with loyalty, satisfaction emerged as a key aspect. If the customer is satisfied, he has more opportunities to have a positive perception of the organization and show its loyalty.

According to these authors, satisfaction plays an important role in mediating the relationship between service quality and customer behavioral intentions, and satisfaction has a direct impact on loyalty.

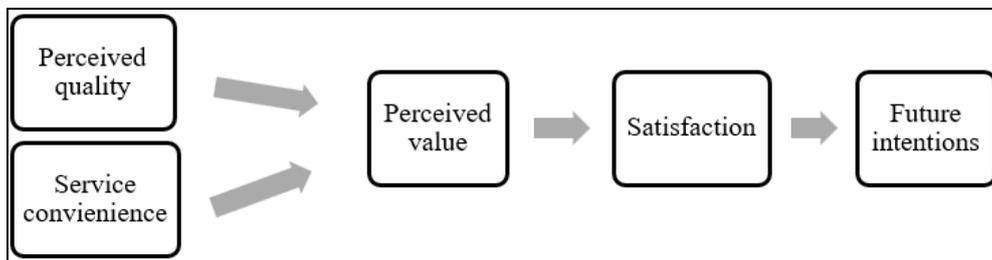


Figure 1: The relationship between perceived service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty
 Source: compiled by the author according to a schedule provided
 Source: García-Fernández et al. (2018a)).

Customer satisfaction mediates the impact of service quality on loyalty (Karatepe, 2011). The results of the study by Howat, Assaker (2013) show that overall satisfaction mediates fully the effects of perceived quality and perceived value on loyalty (behavioral intentions), and perceived quality has the greatest influence on overall satisfaction and loyalty.

According to researchers (Singh, 2016; Almohaimmed, 2019), the quality of internal services also positively correlates with work results (Chen, 2013; Bellou & Andronikidis, 2008), has a significant impact on the productivity and efficiency of the organization (Labanauskaitė & Fominienė, 2016; García-Fernández et al., 2018a).

In summary, the ISQ in an organization can be defined as the state of satisfaction felt by an employee of an organization as an internal customer with the service it receives from

another employee of the organization as an internal service provider. The ISQ has a significant impact not only on the employee's performance, but also on his loyalty to the organization.

Different quality assessment models are used in service quality research, encompassing both theory and practice. However, despite the abundance of research, service quality researchers have not found a consensus on the most objective service quality assessment model that would best reflect a customer's perception of quality and provide tools for improving customer service (Jasinskas, Rėklaitienė & Švagždienė, 2013). According to researchers, the choice of service quality assessment model depends on several important factors: research objectives, the type of services provided by the organization, the market situation and many other factors. In order to properly assess the quality of provided services, the specifics of those services must be taken into account (Jasinskas et al., 2013).

However, although there are many different service quality assessment models, three of them are usually selected as the best in service quality research (Jasinskas et al., 2013):

- a) Parasurman, Zeithaml, Berry's (1991) model of the assessment of service quality SERVQUAL;
- b) Lam, Zhang, Jensen's (2005) Service Quality Assessment Scale (SQAS);
- c) Kim, Kim's (1995) Quality Expectations of Consumers model (QUESOC).

In order to assess the quality of services in research, the service quality model SERVQUAL is most often mentioned and used as the most appropriate (Almohaimmed, 2019). This model is recognized as the best universal service quality research model. This model is based on the assumption that the quality of services is determined by the difference between consumer expectations and the services actually provided / received. According to researchers, the SERVQUAL quality assessment method is useful in that it can be used to evaluate various services - the criteria of the method include various service attributes and reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the service (Jasinskas et al., 2013).

The SERVQUAL model defines 10 service quality assessment factors (criteria): tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding / knowing the customer, access (Parasurman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1991).

These 10 criteria served as the main service quality assessment framework from which the elements for the SERVQUAL scale were derived. The above 10 service quality evaluation criteria are divided into five groups (Jasinskas et al., 2013):

- 1) Tangibles - all the facilities and equipment, staff and communication tools;
- 2) Reliability - the ability to provide the service as promised;
- 3) Responsiveness - the willingness of the staff to provide assistance to the clients and to provide the accurate service;
- 4) Assurance, which relates to:
 - a) competence is assessed as the possession of the skills and knowledge required for the service;
 - b) respectfulness which means polite, respectful behavior, attentiveness and friendliness in dealing with staff;
 - c) confidence as reliability, credibility and honesty of the staff;
 - d) security as a absence of danger, risk and uncertainty;
- 5) Empathy, which means:
 - a) approach of availability and easy communication;
 - b) communication as providing information to the consumer in plain language and listening to the user;
 - c) consumer understanding as making efforts to know your customers and their needs.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1991), SERVQUAL model could be widely applied as a framework that can be adapted to the survey needs of a specific organization. Consequently, though there are many models that allow to assess the quality of services, the most universal model - SERVQUAL - has been chosen for this study.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research methodology

A qualitative methodological approach was chosen as the most appropriate for the study. It is best suited for this study because it allows questions such as “why” and “how” to be asked, and the results of the study do not allow for generalization. The method of semi-

structured in-depth interviews was chosen as the most appropriate way to collect detailed data. A total of 9 interviews were conducted with adults receiving internal services of "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club.

3.2. Research subjects

The number of informants was not strictly determined at the beginning of the study. The interviews were conducted until the theoretical "saturation" was reached. y. data were collected until they started to be repeated and their informativeness clearly decreased (Rupšienė, 2007).

As the chosen object of the research is "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club, the aim of the research was to find informants who receive internal services of this football club:

- 1) Coaches of "Kauno Žalgiris" football club teams (FK "Kauno Žalgiris", FK "Kauno Žalgiris B" and FK "Kauno Žalgiris" (women's team));
- 2) Players of "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club teams;
- 3) Administration and service staff.

3.3. Sampling

Informants for the study were selected using non-probabilistic targeting. In order to find as many informants as possible and to form the full context of "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club, two sampling methods were used:

- 1) convenience sampling;
- 2) snowball / chain / network sampling.

3.4. Interview guidelines, duration

The guidelines for the semi-structured interview are based on the analysis of the data collected during the scientific literature and the exploratory research in order to answer the main question of the research, to implement the aim and objectives of the work. The interview guidelines developed were later tailored to specific informants.

The questions of semi-structured interviews can be divided into several groups according to the models of evaluation of internal service quality in organizations presented in the scientific literature. During the interviews, the informants were asked questions about the organization's:

- a) reliability;
- b) assurance (certainty, guarantee);
- c) tangibles (material values);
- d) empathy;
- e) responsiveness (efficiency / flexibility);
- f) value creation;
- g) communication culture (respectful behavior, honesty, etc.);
- h) workplace equipment, available resources for the work;
- i) opportunities for professional development, training, career advancement;
- j) compliance of the real work to its definition;
- k) staff selection and teamwork;
- l) competence / readiness;
- m) communication within the organization.
- n) vision of senior management;

Interview duration - 30-60 minutes. All semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in Kaunas, Lithuania, at a convenient location agreed with the informants in advance.

Prior to the interview, all informants were introduced to the purpose of the study, the duration, the course of the interview, the nature of the anonymous data and the possibility not to answer the question or to terminate the interview at any time. The informants were also provided with full information on who would use the data collected during the investigation and were asked to allow the interview to be recorded. The anonymity of the subjects is ensured at work by not publishing anywhere who were the specific subjects. All subjects were coded as Informant 1, Informant 2, and so on. Information obtained during the interviews was not used for the study without the consent of the subjects.

3.5. Collected empirical data and results

This study was conducted to determine the internal quality of services in "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club. The most frequently mentioned and used service quality model

SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988, Almohaimmeed, 2019) with five dimensions was used for the research: assurance, reliability, responsiveness, empathy (empathy) and tangibles. The information obtained during the interviews was evaluated according to the dimensions of internal quality assessment of service organizations identified in the scientific literature.

During the research, it was found that "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club has 5 different recipients of internal services: administration and service staff, football club coaches, men's football team players, women's football team players and youth team players.

Regarding the general image of the club and the services provided to all employees, all informants interviewed for the survey stated that "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club provides quality services and provides assurance, all employees continue to see themselves in the organization in the future.

Table 1: Evaluation of "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club internal services according to internal service quality evaluation dimensions of organizations (based on information obtained by the author during the interviews).

Dimensions of evaluation of internal service quality of organization	Research results
Openness	No mistakes are hidden, problems are always willingly solved; It also contributes to the growth of the club and to the search for new contacts, equal partners who would benefit themselves;
Reliability	A very reliable club, which seeks to be considered reliable not only by the people working / playing in the club, but also by all external entities: Lithuanian Football Federation (LFF), various organizations, sponsors, etc.; The club strives to be reliable, to provide quality services not only to its employees and players, but also to its competitors;
Assurance	The organization has earned a very good reputation, it is recommended to each other by the players themselves and the staff; The organization is well known and respected, so working in it is an advantage that secures a place in the job market and helps to move up the career ladder; Employees feel secure about their future, see themselves in the club and in the future;
Freedom of workers	Employees have a great freedom at work; Some employees have budgets assigned to them that they can dispose of in their dealings with suppliers; Employees are trusted, they do not need to consult with the organization's managers on each issue, submit many varied reports;
Motivation	The aim is to motivate employees to work, to feel the attention of managers, therefore various team-building activities are organized for them;
Professional development opportunities	Despite personal motivation to improve, personal development is greatly influenced by work in the club, which constantly encourages learning and improvement of one's work skills;
Empathy	There is a lot of empathy in the club; The organization constantly cares and shows attention to its employees, strives to provide the best possible services;

	<p>Human is a value, and the aim is to create the best possible conditions not only for employees to carry out their direct work and grow as professionals, but also as personalities;</p> <p>The club pursues long-term goals, understands the specifics of each job and does not force its employees to achieve only as many short-term results as possible;</p> <p>The aim is for employees to feel safe and not be forced to constantly think about their chances of surviving in the club so that they do not have to be distracted and can concentrate on their work;</p>
Responsiveness	<p>The organization is flexible enough to respond to unforeseen situations;</p> <p>It is no secret that problems are sometimes encountered, but it is always encouraged to express those problems boldly and to solve them together;</p>
Culture of communication	<p>The culture of communication is high - everyone is friendly, kind and helpful to each other;</p> <p>But the atmosphere in a team is highly dependent on the results: the better the results, the better the atmosphere;</p> <p>The members of the men's soccer team do not spare each other advice and instruction, and the young soccer players are willingly admitted to the main team, invited to spend their free time together;</p> <p>Even after a poorer stage in terms of score, players do not receive more rigor or personal accusations from club management;</p> <p>There is no division in the team between the Lithuanians who make up the core of the team and the legionnaires of the club. The club strives to welcome and integrate all incoming foreigners as friendly as possible;</p> <p>Good interpersonal relationships not only within teams but also with club authorities;</p>
Compliance of the real work to its definition	<p>Team players are not asked to do any extra work other than join various social activities;</p> <p>Other employees of the organization sometimes have to do work that does not belong to them, substituting other colleagues;</p> <p>Employees do not see this as a problem, they accept such situations as a duty to help the organization. If the division of labor is "within reason" and there is not too much extra work for one person, then such assistance to each other in the organization is a plus that helps to unite and "glue" the whole team;</p>
Communication within the organization	<p>The whole "Kaunas Žalgiris" organization is quite large, but there are no problems in communication between the two parts of the organization (basketball and football clubs), they are not somehow separated;</p> <p>Everything is open, employees share all the available information and knowledge;</p> <p>Sometimes information does not "go through" as quickly as one would like;</p> <p>There is a lack of human resources;</p>
The vision, mission and strategy of the club	<p>A clear vision, with high goals that is known to all members of the organization;</p> <p>The club also has a mission and strategy that includes a variety of long-term goals that are pursued consistently and thoughtfully without pursuing short-term benefits;</p>
Creation of the added value	<p>Employees feel they are creating added value;</p> <p>The infrastructure created by the football club, the newly built football stadium, brings great benefits and added value not only to the club itself, the city of Kaunas, but also to the entire development of football sport in Lithuania;</p>

Taking into account the information gathered during the research, it can be stated that according to all the above points, which correspond to the internal service quality assessment dimensions, the internal service quality of "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club can be assessed very well. However, it should be noted that different situations can be observed in different teams belonging to the club. The utmost attention and the highest quality internal services are provided to the main men's team and club staff, sometimes neglecting other women's and youth

teams. Therefore, the internal services provided by the club and their quality problems in women's and youth football teams are discussed below.

3.5.1. Tangibles

Informants interviewed for the research said that the salary at the club is not delayed or the delays are not significant. However, not everyone gets paid for their work at the club. When the players on the main men's team receive various bonuses for their performance in addition to the work-related salary, the representatives of the youth and women's teams do not receive any payment for playing at the club, except for food allowance.

Another problem is not investing in the women's football team. The team budget consists only of revenue from the municipality and the LFF. The research revealed that the club does not invest much in women's football, is not looking for sponsors for the women's football team.

From the data collected during the study, it can be concluded that the greatest influence on the existence of women's football in Lithuania is not the desire of the organizations themselves to educate girls and raise the level of women's football, but the fact that it is required by the LFF, which licenses football clubs. A football club cannot obtain a license for the Lithuanian Football A League if it does not have a women's team.

3.5.2. Workplace equipment

During the interview, when asked about the resources available for the job, all the informants said that the conditions in the club have greatly improved over the last few years. The receivers of the club's internal services did not hide the fact that they might want better or newer equipment, but noted here that they understand that everything depends on financial possibilities and that with the available funds, the club does everything possible and provides everything needed.

However, the available club resources are not equally available to all teams belonging to the club. The study also found that the women's team was inferior to the men's team: they lacked medical staff, and they always had to adjust to the men's or youth team to get a pitch, a fitness coach, a photographer, or another club staff member responsible for communication. They are always forced to adapt to the men's and youth team, as these teams are more prioritized at "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club.

3.5.3. *Recruitment*

In order to provide the highest quality services to external and internal customers, "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club carries out a strict selection of employees, during which it takes into account not only the employee's diploma, but also his / her desire to improve and promote the same values as the club.

According to informants, the club selects highly qualified staff to work in the office or with the core men's soccer team. However, such a careful selection of staff does not take place in terms of the women's team. Here, practically without any greater competition, the person who wants to work is hired, because there is practically no competition for this job.

The research revealed that there is a lack of motivated employees in the women's team, and no one wants to work in it. Because the coaches who work in it do not receive a high salary, they cannot concentrate solely on the women's team, they are often forced to work in several jobs, which affects the quality of training.

Thus, it can be stated that the Kauno Žalgiris women's football team is not given priority anywhere in the organization, the women's football team receives lower quality internal services of the "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club than the men's or youth team.

3.5.4. *Youth team*

Meanwhile, the "Kaunas Žalgiris" youth football team is facing slightly different problems with the quality of the internal services provided to them.

The club has created a whole pyramid of youth education from the youngest children to the men's team, those players who want to go the path of professional sports have a very good opportunity to grow here in the club. However, one of the problems with the internal service quality, which became clear during the research, is that the members of the youth team are not encouraged to be proud of belonging to "Kaunas Žalgiris" organization. Because the youth is not proud of to "Kaunas Žalgiris" organization, they are not interested in the play of other their club teams, nor do they attend matches for the main men's team.

So even though the organization has created the whole pyramid of youth education, members of the youth team are not very proud of their club name, they are not interested in the play of other teams of their club, so it is very difficult to keep them inside the pyramid of the organization. A large proportion of young people leave football and choose another path.

Informants stressed that there may be a problem with loyalty because young people are not motivated in any other way. Most of the B team players are almost adults, 17-18 years old, but do not receive any financial incentives from the club. And this fact may also be the reason for the not very good level of their performance on the football field.

Young people lack not only financial incentives, but also a desire to play and other qualities that are important for athletes. These problems may be addressed by sports psychologists working with young people. However, "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club does not use their services, although the footballers themselves admit that the services provided by sports psychologists could be useful.

In addition, the study revealed that no long-term contracts are signed with members of the youth team. So maybe that's why they don't feel obligated and often leave football and choose another path. Also, the club does not have an equipped accommodation base to which the best athletes can be invited. Now the club rents apartments only to the players of the main team. Talking of building a youth sports base where they can live is, for the time being, just one of the future directions of a football club that would give a greater impetus to the overall competitiveness and professionalism of the team.

Thus, after analyzing the data obtained during the research, it became clear that the youth team of "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club is facing problems with the internal service quality provided by the organization. Although "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club has created a whole pyramid to educate and retain young footballers in the club, due to the quality of internal services provided, it faces a lack of loyalty among young footballers and not as good football results as they would like.

In summary, it can be concluded that different teams in a football club receive different quality of internal services. The biggest differences between these teams are: the salary received, the medical care, the competence of the received coaches, the access to the services of all club staff.

Table 2: The main differences between the quality of internal services received by "Kaunas Žalgiris" football teams.

	The main men's team	Youth team	Women's team
Salary	Receives salary and various bonuses	No salary	No salary, only food allowance
Available resources	Always have everything they need	Always have everything they need	Always has to adapt to the other teams in the club
Coaches	Coaches of the highest competence	Coaches of the highest competence	Employs a coach who wants to work with a women's team

			(there is virtually no rigorous selection of staff)
Medical care	Highest quality medical care	Highest quality medical care	There is no individual team doctor or physical training coach

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study coincide with the findings of the quantitative study obtained by other authors (Pasebani et al. 2012), which confirm the direct relationship between job satisfaction and the quality of internal services, the quality of internal services and the activities of the organization.

The results of the study are also in line with the findings of other researchers, which state that the quality of internal services has a direct impact on job satisfaction (Pasebani et al., 2012; Calabuig-Moreno et al., 2016; Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020; García-Fernández et al., 2016; García-Fernández et al., 2018a; Calabuig-Moreno et al., 2016; Howat & Assaker, 2013; Karatepe, 2011; Dauda et al. 2013; Labanauskaitė & Fominienė 2016), job performance (Singh, 2016; Almohaimmeed, 2019; Chen, 2013; Bellou & Andronikidis, 2008; Labanauskaitė, Fominienė, 2016; García-Fernández et al., 2018a) and loyalty (Avourdiadou & Theodorakis, 2014; Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020; García-Fernández et al., 2016; Jasinskas et al., 2016).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A qualitative study of "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club found that there are 5 different recipients of internal services in this organization: administration and service staff, football club coaches, men's football team players, women's football team players and youth team players. The study found that different recipients of internal services of "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club receive services of different quality.

Coaches, men's football team players, administration and service staff receive the highest quality internal services. The lowest quality internal services are received by those who do not generate income for the club - women's and youth football teams. The biggest differences between these two groups are: the salary received, the medical care, the competence of the received coaches, the access to the services of all club staff.

The club should ensure that all resources are available to all football teams belonging to the club. Although "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club has created an entire pyramid for the education of young footballers, it faces a lack of loyalty from them due to quality problems of

internal services provided. It is recommended that "Kaunas Žalgiris" football club solve the problems of internal service quality and develop a strategy aimed at promoting the loyalty and pride of youth teams in belonging to "Kaunas Žalgiris" organization.

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