A multi-dimensional model and approach for evaluation of service quality in private education

A key to competitiveness on a rapidly changing market

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KTH Industrial Engineering and Management

Master of Science Thesis

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En flerdimensionell modell och metod för utvärdering av servicekvalitet inom privat utbildning

En nyckel till konkurrenskraft på en snabbt föränderlig marknad

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Sammanfattning

På grund av den kraftiga tillväxt som skett i servicesektorn, vilken idag står för ungefär 70 procent av den totala ekonomiska aktiviteten i världen, har anpassning till nya krav blivit en förutsättning för att säkra en stark position på en snabbt föränderlig och konkurrensutsatt marknad. Oron för kvalitet har därmed vuxit och begreppet är idag, mer än någonsin, en viktig del av en organisations verklighet och vardag. Tidigare modeller för utvärdering av servicekvalitet betonar att kvalitetsbegreppet är mångfacetterat. Trots detta föreslås dessa modeller vara ganska begränsade utifrån en helhetssyn. Vidare är de heller inte tillräckligt anpassade till den specifika service som är föremål för utvärdering. Syftet med detta examensarbete var att utveckla en heltäckande modell och metod för utvärdering och förbättring av servicekvalitet, vilken medför att ett privat utbildningsföretag kan säkra en stark position på en konkurrensutsatt och snabbt föränderlig marknad. En fältstudie bestående av ett antal semistrukturerade intervjuer och en datorbaserad enkät genomfördes i samarbete med ett privat utbildningsföretag. Med hjälp av Voice of the Customer och ett systembaserat synsätt kunde kvalitetskonceptet definieras och de följande kvalitetsdimensionerna kunde identifieras:

- Resultatkvalitet
- Struktur- och innehållskvalitet
- Kvalitet hos den administrativa Personalens interaktionsförmåga
- Kvalitet hos lärarnas interaktionsförmåga
- Kvalitet hos den fysiska miljön

Kvalitetsansvariga inom sektorn för privat utbildning kan använda den föreslagna modellen som ett verktyg för utvärdering av nuvarande arbete och därigenom genomföra viktiga kvalitetsförbättringar. Vidare kan den föreslagna modellen och metoden också användas som grund för studier inom andra serviceområden för utveckling av liknande och för dessa områden anpassade modeller.

Nyckelord: *servicekvalitet, utvärderingsmodell, kvalitetsförbättring, privat utbildning, kundfokus, systemtänkande, Voice Of the Customer*

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Abstract

Due to the considerable growth of the service sector, which today accounts for roughly 70 percent of the total economic activity worldwide, adapting to new demands is a prerequisite for securing a strong position on a rapidly changing and competitive market. The concern for quality grows and the concept has become a more than ever important part of organizational reality. Existing models for evaluation of service quality share the common trait of emphasizing the concept of quality as a multifaceted one; still these models are proposed to be rather limited from a comprehensive view. Furthermore, they are not adapted specifically to the service being subject to evaluation. The purpose of this thesis was to develop a comprehensive model and approach for evaluation and improvements of service quality in order for a private education company to secure a strong position in a competitive and rapidly changing market climate. A case study consisting of a number of semi-structured interviews and a computer-based survey was performed in cooperation with a private education company. By using Voice of the Customer and a systems approach the concept of quality could be defined and the following dimensions of quality could be identified:

- Outcome Quality
- Structure and Contents Quality
- Administration Interaction Quality
- Teacher Interaction Quality
- Physical Environment Quality

Service Quality Managers in the sector of private education can use the proposed model as a tool for evaluation of current work and thereby enforce important quality improvements. Furthermore, the proposed model and approach can also be used as a foundation for studies within other service settings for development of similar and for those areas adapted models.

Keywords: service quality, evaluation model, quality improvement, private education, customer focus, systems approach, Voice Of the Customer

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

This first section initially presents the background of the thesis as well as its purpose and the research questions it aims at answering. Subsequently, identified delimitations will be described and finally the structure of the remainder of the thesis will sum up this introduction.

1.1 Background

Organizations of today face a more changing environment than ever before. This entails a number of challenges of which the most severe one is how to satisfy the demand for higher quality services and products (Lo & Sculli, 1997). In an environment characterized by increased and more intense competition the concern for quality grows and the concept of quality has become a more than ever important part of organizational reality. Adapting to new demands is a prerequisite for securing a strong position on a rapidly changing and competitive market and by that ensuring the survival and success of the organization (Asubonteng et al., 1996).

The concept of quality is broad and not always clearly defined but its overall meaning has evolved with time and mainly in the last century. 60 years ago quality was associated with visible design, inherent superiority and luxury of the product. Gradually this focus has shifted towards a more customer based approach with focus on customer expectations. Today customers are more willing to apply the concept of quality with the cheapest of products as long as it meets their expectations (Redding, 2005). The quest for quality has, in the last two decades, resulted in considerable development of how organizations operate regarding product, service and process quality. Furthermore, the service sector has grown considerably and today it accounts for roughly 70 percent of the total economic activity worldwide (World Bank, 2011, p.62).

Design and luxury ➡ **Customer expectations**
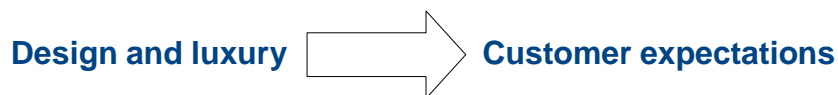
Figure 1. The concept of quality: Development during the last 60 years

Previous research on evaluation of quality and quality improvements emphasize the many dimensions inherent in the concept and stress the importance to consider this when applying it (Arvidsson, 2007). Current models for evaluation of service quality do emphasize that the

concept as a multifaceted one, still companies struggle with uncertainty when making efforts to measure and evaluate their service quality (Johnson et al., 1995). Quality in service has, due to these statements, become a popular and well debated area. This also applies to the part of the service sector dealing with education; still few studies have addressed this area in relation to private education. Moreover, models used in education and other services are too simple. They do not bring up the importance of depth in time and they only vaguely discuss whom to apply the specific model to (stakeholders) or solely apply it to students. It is also of great importance to adapt the model to the actual service, which is subject to evaluation, and to define the concept of quality properly when using it (Sousa & Voss, 2002). If company management is to enforce quality improvements, a clear definition of quality is valuable. A vague or non-existent definition may cause employees acting based on their own thoughts about quality, which due to non-consistency may reduce effectiveness and have negative impact on the resulting work (Asubonteng et al., 1996). Given the above statements it is apparent that an educational organization has to take several aspects into consideration in order to perform a successful evaluation for improvements of service quality. How the work is performed in this area is important for the extent to which the company keeps up with development and changes in the environment. Thereby it indirectly affects the success of the company. The importance of this work is further emphasized when facing the fact that the educational organization possesses an important key role in education of today's students, as well as in creating and preparing future professionals (Petridou & Chatzipanagiotou, 2004).

This study investigates how service quality in private education can be evaluated and improved through a new model and approach. The issues addressed in this Master's thesis are of importance to Service Quality Managers as well as researchers in the area of service quality. Service Quality Managers in the sector of private education can use the developed model as a tool for evaluation of current work and thereby enforce important quality improvements. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance for managers to understand how customers define quality, what service quality exists of and how to evaluate it (Asubonteng et al., 1996). The result of this study can also be used as a foundation for further research in the area of evaluation of quality and quality improvements in other educational organizations and organizations dealing with services.

1.2 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this Master's thesis is to develop a comprehensive model and approach for evaluation and improvement of service quality in order for a private education company to improve its education program and thereby stay competitive in a rapidly changing market climate.

Based on identified shortcomings within current models the research questions this thesis aims at answering are:

- Which method can be used to define quality when developing an approach and model for evaluation of service quality?

- Which aspects are important to include in an approach and model for evaluation of service quality and why?

1.3 Delimitations

This research was conducted as a case study of a private education company and its former students in Sweden. One substantial limitation was that included data was collected from one company in an industry where several different specializations exist. By including several service providers within the area of private education the result would be better established. The company, Safe-education, pursues several different education programs in the field of exercise and health, but the findings and conclusions made in this thesis are mainly based on the empirical material collected in relation to one of these, the personal trainer (PT) program.

The number of studied stakeholder groups was limited to three: students, employers and employees within the education company. In a more extended study views from e.g. employed teachers or clients in the gym would be of interest. Involving additional stakeholders would most probably make the model even more suitable for its purpose.

The concept of benchmarking is another important method commonly used by companies when evaluating their own quality and increasing competitiveness of their company. However, this method has been left out in this thesis.

Presented delimitations have not been investigated any further due to the limited time span.

1.4 Structure of the remainder of the thesis

The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows. In the next section, **2. Methodology**, the research methods and procedures used to be able to answer the research questions are described. Here is also the motivation of the chosen methodology the identified limitations of the study presented. In section **3. Frame of reference**, relevant literature is reviewed and the theoretical framework is presented. Sections **4. Empirical findings, part one** and **5. Empirical findings, part two**, presents the findings of the study and in Section **6. The proposed model**, the developed model will be presented. In section **7. Analytic discussion** the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the frame of reference. Finally, the summarized results of the study and the conclusion are presented in Section **8. Conclusion.** Section **9. Further research** provides directions areas of potential future research.

2. Methodology

In this chapter the methodology used for the empirical study will be introduced. Initially the studied company is presented. Thereafter, the used methods and the structure for analysis are explained. Section 2 is then concluded by a motivation of the used methodology and a summation of the limitations and methodological considerations of this thesis.

2.1 The case study company

SAFE Education was established in year 1995 as one of the first Swedish undergraduate education programs focusing on personal training. Since then Safe education has educated several thousands of students and their ability to master a profession as a personal trainer (PT). The demand for the service of personal training has grown at a rapid pace during the last 10 years and the customer base has broadened and become more diversified (SAFE Education, 2013). With rising demands and a more diversified customer base follow increased requirements on the knowledge and expertise that the educated individual possesses. Furthermore, the profession has become more multi-dimensional and thereby a broader body of knowledge is requested. Exercise has nowadays been accompanied by knowledge about food and diet, stress management, communication and other adjacent subjects. All indications point to a continued high demand for educated people in the specific profession and that this will be the case also in the foreseeable future (SAFE Education, 2013). The market, on which the studied company is established, is characterized by increasing competition and great expectations of stakeholders. It demands flexibility and the ability to adapt to an evolving environment. The described market as well as the characteristics of the company makes SAFE Education an interesting and suiting case for this study.

2.2 Methodological structure, an overview

In this section the methodology, consisting of two parts, is briefly presented in order to give an overview of the information gathering process (Table 1). In section 2.3 and 2.4 each of the two parts will be explained more in detail.

Table 1. An initial presentation and overview of the methodology used in this thesis

EMPIRICAL STUDY, PART ONE	EMPIRICAL STUDY, PART 2
• Broad literature study	• Design and pilot test of computer-based survey
• Definition of total population of students	• Computer-based survey
• Randomized sample, student population divided into two different groups	○ Remaining part of former students (Sample 2)
• Design and pilot test of interview structures	• Design and pilot test of interview structures
• 13 qualitative semi-structured interviews	• 3 qualitative semi-structured interviews
○ 11 former students (Sample 1)	○ 3 potential employers (recruiters)
○ 2 employees	• Analysis and compilation of information
• 1 e-mail interview	• Evaluation of the initial quality evaluation model
○ 1 employee	• Development of the proposed model
• Analysis and compilation of information	
• Development of the initial model	

2.3 The empirical study, part one

Methods used for the initial collection, analysis and compilation of primary and secondary empirical data are presented below. The line of action is presented in figure 2.
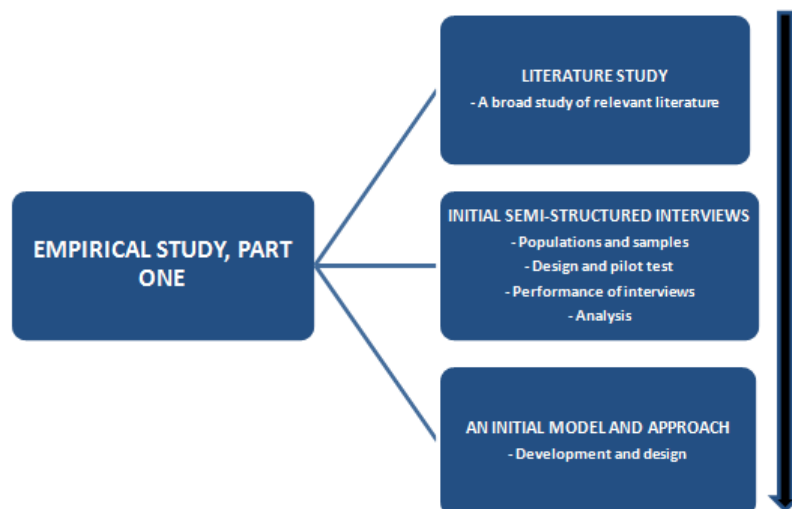
Figure 2. The empirical study, part one: Line of action

2.3.1 Literature study

Secondary empirical data was primarily collected from a wide range of scientific articles and books. The study of this literature resulted in the theoretical framework of this thesis. The major part of the read literature focused on service quality, evaluation of service quality, quality improvement and educational organizations.

2.3.2 Initial semi-structured interviews: Populations and samples

Due to the purpose of this study former students and employees of the education company were seen as fundamental populations to include in my research. These populations were due to their experiences regarding the education program and the company in focus seen as carriers of relevant information.

- **Population 1:** Former students of the education program, educated during the year of 2012

  Sample: A randomized sample was drawn from a list of data accessed from the company. This was done using a simple self-created computer program written in Java. The list of data consisted of all former students from the year of 2012 and from this a randomized sample based on three different groups was drawn. Each group represented a city in Sweden in which the company educates PT:s, Gothenburg, Malmo and Stockholm. The number of students in each group was based on the number of students attending the program in each city. The reason for dividing the total population in these groups was to be able to discriminate between cities and decide if the experience of the education program and services differed depending on where you attended your studies. Based on the limited time for performing, transliterate and analyze the interviews 25 former students were included in the randomized sample. The hope was to reach a response rate of approximately 30-50%, thus somewhere between 8-12 interviews (resulting response rate was 44%/11 interviews).

- **Population 2:** Current employees within the company

  Sample: Regarding current employees these were sampled based on their role in the company. Interesting employees based on their roles were:
  - Education Officer 1
  - Education Officer 2
  - Quality Manager 1

2.3.3 Initial semi-structured interviews: Design, pilot test and performance

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were performed with former students and current employees of the education company. To minimize possible bias all informants were offered anonymity. The pre-designed interview structure was subject to a simple pilot test during which they were discussed with one person with basic knowledge in the area. This test was performed in order to ensure that all questions were formulated in an understandable and valid way. My intention was to perform as many interviews as possible face to face, in order to get a more complete impression and to be able to ask the most suitable follow up questions. When the physical distance limited the possibility to meet the informant face to face or when the informant wished so, telephone interviews were performed instead. The goal with each interview was to follow the pre-designed interview structure but also to let the informants talk freely and enable them to highlight aspects and dimensions about the subject which I might have missed or not had in mind. In this way it was possible to discover new angles and go beyond the limits of my own thoughts and knowledge about the subject.

Performed interviews:

- 11 semi-structured interviews with former students of the studied education program (Structure of interviews is to be found in Appendix 1).

- Two semi-structured interviews with current employees, Education Officer 1 and the Quality Manager of the PT education program, were performed. The goal with these interviews was to get to know the structure of the education program better and to get a grip on the current work regarding quality and quality improvements made by the company (Structures of interviews are to be found in Appendix 2 and 3, respectively). Also a short e-mail interview regarding the currently used evaluation method was performed with Education Officer 2.

2.3.4 Analysis of initial semi-structured interviews

During the literature study common characteristics in current literature was documented and compiled. Characteristics such as dimensions and sub-dimensions of quality were included. Furthermore, other interesting aspects proposed to be important for further studies and development of the proposed model was compiled.

Each of the performed interviews was recorded and then transliterated within 48 hours. The

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time frame was set to limit misinterpretation and loss of important details. Recording the interviews also made it possible to put complete focus on the informant and the performance of the interview. Furthermore, a document with the transliteration from the performed interview was sent to each informant for approval. This ensured the informant that no sensitive information would be used, as well as ensured the avoidance of misunderstandings since these could be corrected immediately before any of the information was used in this thesis.

The transliteration of the interview with the employees was summarized based on relevant information for this thesis. When all interviews had been carried out in the student group the transliterations were analyzed and recurring aspects and other relevant aspects were documented. Relevant themes used for analysis and compilation was e.g. "Opinions about teachers" (sub-themes e.g. competence and knowledge, communication), "Opinions about the contents and structure of the education program" (sub-themes e.g. "Theory and practice", "Time"). Themes and sub-themes were based on the most discussed topics during the 11 interviews. The reason for this choice was to highlight the themes and sub-themes most frequently mentioned by the former students to be able to develop the initial model. In case of any obscurity or doubt when analyzing the transliterations, the respondent was contacted to further unravel or complete the corresponding incomplete or arcane answer.

2.3.5 An initial model and approach: Development and design

As a result of the empirical study, part one, an initial model was developed. Moreover, aspects proposed to be important for further studies were summarized. The initial model and documented aspects was used as a starting-point for the empirical study, part two.

2.4 The empirical study, part two

The following section presents the second part of the empirical study. Methods used for further collection, analysis and compilation of secondary empirical data are presented below. The line of action is presented in figure 3.
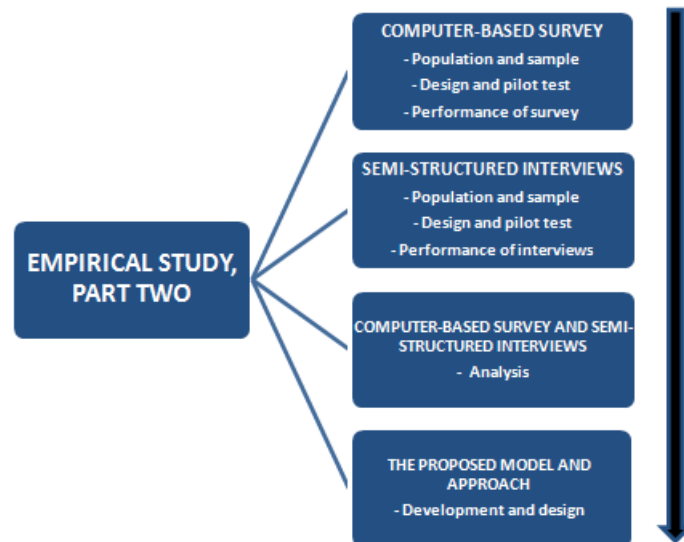
Figure 3. The empirical study, part two: Line of action

2.4.1 Computer-based survey: Population and sample

To gain more specific information about service quality and the quality demands which the educated individual is exposed to, interviews were performed with another important stakeholder, the potential future employer of the students. Furthermore, the remaining part of students from the year of 2012 was assumed to be a favorable group for performing a computer-based survey. The purpose of this survey was to gain deepened and more detailed information regarding the students' view of service quality.

- **Population 3:** Remaining part of students from the year of 2012

Sample: Since the remaining part of the students accessed via the information from the case company (the ones not included in the randomized sample) was considered as carriers of important information, all these students constituted a favorable sample for a computer-based survey.

2.4.2 The computer-based survey: Design, pilot test and performance

The purpose of performing the computer-based survey was to gain deeper knowledge about how an efficient model and approach for evaluation of quality in private education should be designed. Questions asked in the computer-based survey were designed based on the findings in part one of the empirical study and aiming at answering the research questions of this study. With these issues in focus the computer-based survey was designed and pilot tested. The pilot test panel included three different individuals with different but relevant backgrounds and knowledge (total quality management, application handiness/software development and teaching/pedagogy in physical education). The purpose of the pilot test was to make sure the questions were easy to understand and interpreted correctly (Collins & Hussey, 2009, p.193). The design of the computer-based survey is to be found in Appendix 5.

The remaining part of the former students (exact number of students cannot be specified since the company has requested that this information should be excluded) received an e-mail containing an invitation to participate in the survey. The received e-mail included a presentation of the Master's thesis and a link to the SurveyMonkey questionnaire. It also contained the information that participation was completely anonymous. This information was given in order to make the informant feel comfortable in answering the questions, knowing that no one would be able to link individual answers to her or him. Due to the limited time available for the thesis process, a time period of 25 days was set for the opportunity to participate in the survey. Reminder e-mails were sent two times during this period. The first reminder was sent after 10 days and the second one after 20 days. A self-locking function included in the SurveyMonkey platform, stopped students from participating in the survey more than once. After 25 days the link was inactivated and it was no longer possible to participate in the survey.

2.4.3 Semi structured interviews: Population and sample

Potential future employers of the students were proposed to be an interesting population to include in this study. This was due to their possession of knowledge about the market's demands and expectations.

- **Population 4:** Recruiters within companies regarded as potential employers of PT:s

Sample: How this sample was picked will be left out in this report, since participating recruiters have chosen to be anonymous. The selection criterion was relevant for this study and proper

statistics were used. Five training companies were contacted and from here these will be denoted "Training Company 1-5".

2.4.4 Semi-structured interviews: Design, pilot test and performance

An e-mail was sent to each of the five companies included in Population 4. This e-mail was sent directly to, or was directed to a person responsible for the recruitment of PT:s within the company. Three of the companies agreed to participate. The interview structure was designed and subject to a simple pilot test. As with the semi-structured interviews performed with the former students all three of the recruiters were offered anonymity and a document with the transliteration from the interview was sent to each of them for approval.

Performed interviews:

- Three semi-structured interviews potential employers of the students (Structure of interviews are to be found in Appendix 4).

2.4.5 Analysis: Semi-structured interviews and computer-based survey

The SurveyMonkey platform used for the computer-based survey made it possible to statistically analyze the answers of all multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire directly. All answers on each open-ended question were put together by the platform but the final analysis of these questions was performed manually. Each response was closely examined. Themes and key words were placed in different categories to be able to more clearly view the importance of each category (Collins & Hussey, 2009, p.165). In this way quality dimensions already stated could be evaluated further and the emergence of new important aspects and dimensions could be retrieved. Performed interviews with the potential employers was recorded and then transliterated within 48 hours. Transliterations from these interviews were compiled and important and common aspects were documented.

2.4.6 The proposed model and approach: Development and design

As a result of the second part of the empirical study the proposed model and approach was developed.

2.5 The chosen methodology

This section presents the motivation, limitations and methodological considerations of the chosen methodology.

2.5.1 Motivation

By dividing the empirical study into two parts important and fundamental knowledge could first be obtained during the more exploratory part one of the empirical study. This knowledge could later, in the second part of the empirical study, be applied as an important foundation and thereby further extended to an advantageous level for development of the proposed model.

A case study makes it is possible to collect information and reach a broad as well as deep understanding of the studied area. Moreover, it is also common to use several different methods during the research process, both qualitative and quantitative (Collins & Hussey, 2009, s.82). The method of semi-structured qualitative interviews were chosen since this method offers a common foundation for all interviews, resulting in reliable data which to base the analysis of the material on (Trost, 2005). Also the flexibility offered by semi-structured interviews gives the informants greater possibility and freedom to express themselves and their point of view and thereby contributing with important information for the study and development of a more reliable model (Collins & Hussey, 2009, p.195). Recordings made during the interviews made it possible to transliterate each interview and thereby analyze it several times to remember and use all important information. Recordings and transliterations was very useful both for my own research and memory, but also for the informant to be able to approve the collected and used information.

A computer-based survey offers an economic and less time-consuming way to gather information from a larger number of individuals. Therefore this method was suitable for this study as well as for the number of students included in the sample (Collins & Hussey, 2009, p.192). The collected data could then also be compared with information collected during the interviews, reducing bias and making results and conclusions more trustworthy (Collins & Hussey, 2009, p.85).

2.5.2 Limitations and methodological considerations

Two important and commonly used concepts in relation to methodological considerations are reliability and validity. Reliability refers to the findings of the research and to which extent these findings would be the same if the study was to be repeated. Absence of differences

would refer to high reliability. Validity in this case concerns asking the right questions to be able to receive the kind of answers you were looking for (Collins & Hussey, 2009, p.64). The reason for performing the initial semi-structured interviews was to gain knowledge about the students' thoughts and to identify important aspects for further studies. By doing this, the validity of the second part of the empirical study could be increased, since this helped me to formulate and ask relevant questions.

It probably would have been ideal if the researcher's performing this research would have had a higher level of experience or prior knowledge regarding customer research and models of evaluation already when initiating the study. The collected, analyzed and compiled scientific articles constituted a relevant and acceptable knowledge-base to build the research upon, still the area of research is large and complex and more information on the subject is available. However, the literature study covered a large amount of scientific material in relation to the time available for performing the research. It would also have been advantageous if the analysis would have been performed by more than one person, since it involves a lot of compilation and some answers could be interpreted in different ways. Even though a lot of work was put at this stage of research, the human factor is always present.

One limitation and reason for a lowered validity could be the informant's position or his or her employer, since loyalty towards the company and/or certain rules may cause bias in the informants' answers. To minimize this kind of bias each respondent was offered anonymity, and the ability to read the transliteration from the interview for approval before any information could be used. Furthermore, it has been some time since the students' attended the education program and this may cause loss of details.

Both the interview structures and the SurveyMonkey Questionnaire were subject to a pilot test, which increases the validity. Designing a questionnaire is a complex task. The one designed and used in this study contained both open- and close-ended questions to capture both general opinions as well as a deeper view regarding certain subjects. Multiple-choice questions (closed questions) are generally convenient and easy to analyze. Open-ended questions offer respondents the possibility to express themselves more freely and in their own words (Collins & Hussey, 2009, p.201). The purpose was to design a questionnaire suitable for the given time span available for this thesis, but also to capture important contributions for the result of the study. The process of this thesis is described in a way making it possible to repeat it (All structures and questions available in Appendixes), thus the reliability in this case is high. Differences in analysis and compilation may decrease the reliability, since this part is complex. It would have been advantageous to let several other individuals analyze and compile the results.

I made the choice to let the respondents answer questions freely and thereby not design a questionnaire in which all or a number of questions were mandatory. 35 questions may seem like a lot of questions and by excluding mandatory questions my hope was that the response rate would be increased. Furthermore, this was seen as a way to decrease the time for eliminating irrelevant answers. The survey response rate varied from a few percent up to 30,0%, with an average response rate of 15,5% (Appendix 6). Adding some time for the possibility to participate maybe would have increased the response rate, but two days after sending the second reminder e-mail the number of incoming replies declined and shortly thereafter no more answers were received. Another question is if some kind of reward would have improved the results. No good standard exists when it comes to survey response rates. Standards have been discussed but it is also a matter of judgement (Cummings et. al., 2001). However, the response rate was seen as acceptable regarding a majority of the questions since patterns emerged. Still, a higher response rate would result in more reliable findings.

3. Frame of reference

This section introduces the theoretical framework of this thesis. The theory takes off in the concept of quality and moves towards current models concerning evaluation of service quality.

3.1 The concept of quality

Quality is a very dynamic concept since it is subjective in nature and thus a matter of personal judgement (Cheng, 2003). Owing to the complex nature of the concept, researchers have been unable to establish one single definition of product or service quality (Sousa & Voss, 2002).

A number of definitions have been proposed such as Joseph Jurans *"Quality is fitness for use"*, Sud Ingles *"Conformance to the requirements that are expected by the customer at a reasonable price"* and Genichi Taguchis *"Least cost to the society from the point the product is shipped out of factory"*. No absolute definition of quality exists. However, in today's rapidly changing and competitive environment, it is expected that an organization will provide high quality not only in shape of its products or services, but in every single aspect of its business (Somasundaram & Badir, 1992).

Several authors argue that the appropriate choice of definition of quality depends on the circumstances in which it will be used (Reeves & Bednar, 1994; Garvin, 1984). As mentioned by Cheng (2003), Garvin (1984) also points out quality as a complex and multi-dimensional concept. In the year of 1987 the latter one also proposed eight different dimensions of quality:

1. Aesthetics: How the product looks, feels, sounds, tastes or smells.

2. Conformance: Accuracy and timeliness and other frequent mistakes.

3. Durability: "The amount of use one gets from a product before it breaks down and replacement is preferable to continued repair."

4. Features: Characteristics that supplement basic functions of the product.

5. Perceived quality: Reputation is an important factor contributing to the perceived quality. Advertising, brand names and image might be critical factors.

6. Performance: Quick and exact service.

7. Reliability: "Mean time to first failure, the mean time between failures, and the failure rate per unit time". This factor is less applicable to services and products that are consumed immediately and more applicable to durable goods.

8. Serviceability: Speed, courtesy, competence and ease of repair. A company's routines for handling complaints.

Also Stone-Romero et al. (1997) support the multi-dimensional character of the quality concept. They also state that researchers do not clearly define quality when using the concept.

The ability to recognize different quality dimensions are strategically important for every company, with the difference that the importance of each dimension varies across industries as well as with the individual product or service. There is only one way for a company to reach competitive advantage through their products' or services' quality dimensions. This is when compliance is reached between the company's performance along these individual dimensions and the performance the market demands for each of them (Garvin, 1984).

According to Sousa and Voss (2002) future studies should aim at defining quality in a way so that it encompasses relevant dimensions for the organization in focus. They elucidate the usefulness of Garvin's eight dimensions of quality as a robust framework for future research, since it covers a wide range of markets as well as products. Furthermore, they emphasize the usability of the framework but also the advantage of considering other more applicable and appropriate quality dimensions when needed. Modification of Garvin's framework may therefore be carried out in purpose to fit one particular situation.

3.2 Current and important models in literature

Due to its importance for the success of the company, service quality is a discussed topic in marketing literature (Zeithaml et al., 1996). A significant amount of research has focused on different aspects of service quality and a variety of assessment and quality models have been proposed. The common view is that the concept consists of a number of different and underlying dimensions. However, researchers seem to be having a hard times agreeing on the precise nature of these dimensions. Subsequent research pinpoints the importance of tailoring service quality measurement to the context being examined (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Johnson et al., 1995; Asubonteng et al., 1996). Furthermore, it also identifies the importance of context-specific tailoring of the quality dimensions based on a context suitable for the service industry.

Two important and fundamental models for the subsequent development in the studied area are the Nordic model proposed by Grönroos (1984) and the American model or the SERVQUAL model, developed in 1988 (Parasuraman et al.). These two models will be presented in section 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 below.

3.2.1 The Nordic model: Grönroos

Grönroos (1984) argues that two different types of product performance have to be translated into terms of quality when developing a service quality model, thus he formulated and defined "the technical quality dimension" and "the functional quality dimension". Technical quality concerns the outcome or what the customer receives as a result from the service when the buyer-seller interactions and the service production process are over. The customer makes measurement of this dimension in a slightly objective manner, comparable with other technical dimensions concerning a product. It is also of great importance for the customers how the service is transferred. This is what functional quality is all about, the expressive delivery of a service, how the technical quality are transferred to the customer. This involves all interactions between the customer and the service provider. The functional quality dimension is not as easy to evaluate in an objective way as the technical dimension. In point of fact, this dimension is perceived in a quite subjective way (Grönroos, 1984).

According to Grönroos (1984) the company image influences customer expectations. Furthermore, he states that the image can be expected to be built up primarily by the technical quality and the functional quality of its services. Less important, but still factors that influence the customers picture of a service is external factors, e.g. tradition and word-of-mouth communications as well as traditional marketing activities, e.g. advertising and public relations (PR) (Grönroos, 1984). Traditional marketing activities such as advertising can be used in order to build up an image and make promises to potential customers. Promises made in this way influence the expectations that customers will have as well as having an impact on the service these customers expect. Any method of marketing, concerning any of the quality dimensions of the service, promising too much will result in increased expectations and a higher expected service level. Failing with fulfilling the expectations of customers and thereby disappointing them, may cause damage to the company image. This is why it is of great importance that the created and communicated image is in line with the delivered service in a way so that the customers will receive what they expected or more. Therefore, it is fundamental that employees within the company have a realistic picture of, as well as great knowledge in their own services as well as the customers' opinion about these. The importance of the company image or the reputation of the company is also emphasized by Lehtinen & Lehtinen (1982) which name this dimension of quality Corporate quality (further proposed are also the dimensions of Physical quality including equipment used and Interactive quality pinpointing interactions between customers and employees). In figure 4 Grönroos (1984) model and the relationships between its parts are presented.
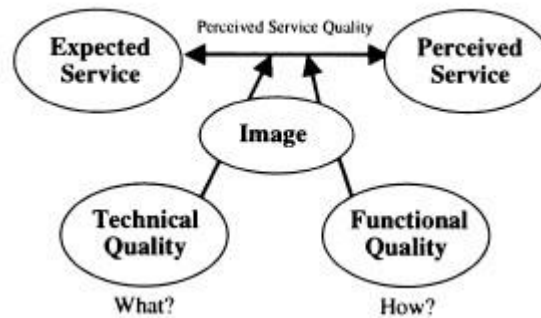
Figure 4. The Nordic Model proposed by Grönroos (1984)

Management has to put effort in matching the perceived service quality with expected service quality in order to satisfy the customers. To keep this gap as small as possible there are two factors that seem to be of great importance for the company (Grönroos, 1984):

- The coordination of marketing efforts with the actual service and perceived service by customers, as well as assuring that word-of-mouth communications are kept realistic.

- The possession of knowledge on how the different quality dimensions are influenced, as well as how these are perceived by customers.

Grönroos (1984) states that the functional quality dimension is of greater importance to the perceived service quality than the technical quality dimension when talking about the service industry. This was also stated by Swan and Comb (1976) which proposed two quality dimensions similar to the dimensions proposed by Grönroos. The statement regarding the importance of the functional quality dimension stays valid as long as the level of technical quality is satisfactory. These relationships are even more important to service industries where the major part of the technical quality is similar and difficult to differentiate among the different firms in the marketplace. The importance of the functional quality dimension, managing buyer-seller interactions, should therefore be given a bit of extra attention when making evaluation and quality improvements. Still an acceptable level of technical quality is a prerequisite to be able to receive a successful functional quality. When the functional quality is considered good, problems regarding the technical quality are more often excused. Grönroos (1984) identifies that more research on the customers' view of service quality is needed.

3.2.2 The American model (SERVQUAL): Parasuraman et al.

The SERVQUAL model was proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985) to measure service quality from a customer perspective. Adaptations of this model have been used in a number settings ranging from health care to fast-food restaurants and banking (Asubonteng et al., 1996). The foundation of the SERVQUAL model is based on the comparison between expectations and performance and how this relationship influences the customers' perception of quality. The level of perceived quality depends on the gap between expectations and performance. This gap is referred to as the performance-to-expectations gap (Asubonteng et al., 1996).

Parasuraman et al. (1985) divide service quality attributes into five different dimensions. Four of these dimensions are process dimensions, experienced by the customer during service delivery. All five dimensions are used by customers in their evaluation of service quality, and are thus subject to the performance-to-expectations comparison (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Below, each of the five SERVQUAL-dimensions in figure 5 is presented more in detail.
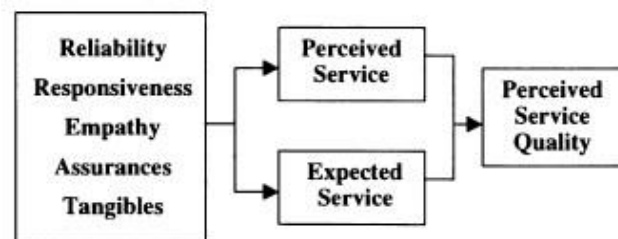
Figure 5. The SERVQUAL model or American model proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988).

Reliability:
- Providing the core service as promised (e.g. teaching the correct concepts)

Responsiveness:
- Employees willingness to assist customers and help solving their problems when requested
- Promptness of service such as waiting times

Empathy:
- How the customer is treated (e.g. personalized attention)
- Staff friendliness

Assurance:
- Employee projecting confidence and trust to customers
- Employee experience and knowledge

Tangibles:
- Appearance of physical facilities
- Appearance of equipment
- Appearance of company employees
- Appearance of communication materials

The SERVQUAL model has, so far, been the most popular model in literature but it has also been criticized and challenged due to the question of its applicability across different industries (Asubonteng et al., 1996). Furthermore, this model has been criticized for focusing mainly on the functional (process) dimensions of quality and giving less attention to the outcomes of the service (Alexandris et al., 2004; Brady & Cronin, 2001).

3.2.3 A multilevel service-quality model: Brady and Cronin

Following the Nordic model and the SERVQUAL model several multi-dimensional models have been developed. One of these is the model proposed by Brady & Cronin (2001). These two researchers proposed a service quality model built upon multiple levels (figure 6). The first level measures service quality based on three dimensions, all part of the formation of customer service quality perception: interaction quality, outcome quality and physical environment quality. Interaction quality and outcome quality are adapted mostly from Grönroos (1984) and thereby the Nordic model. The dimension concerning the physical environment has, according to Brady and Cronin (2001) great impact on a customer's perception of quality and thereby should be considered a primary dimension. Sub-dimensions of the three primary dimensions are partly collected and modified from the SERVQUAL-model.
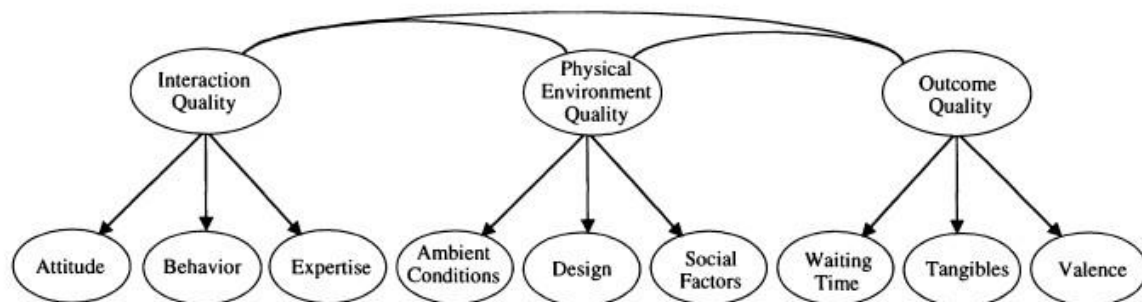
Figure 6. Model proposed by Brady and Cronin (2001)

Interaction quality concerns the interactions that take place between company employees and customers during service delivery. Three different sub-dimensions influence the interaction quality perceived by customers:

- Staff attitude (e.g. staff friendliness)
- Staff behavior (e.g. staff responding to customer needs)
- Staff expertise (e.g. staff knowledge)

Physical Environment Quality concerns the more tangible elements of the organization. Also this quality dimension has got three sub-dimensions:

- Ambient conditions (e.g. atmosphere, scent, temperature e.g.)
- Design of the facilities (e.g. layout)
- Social factors (e.g. other customers' behaviors and the interaction among customers)

Outcome Quality which is similar to the term technical quality proposed by Grönroos (1984) is supported by Brady and Cronin (2001) and three sub-dimensions are proposed:

- Waiting time
- Tangible elements
- Valence (attributes controlling whether the customer believes that the outcome of the service is good or bad, regardless of the opinion concerning any other aspect of the experience).

Each of the nine sub-dimensions also have three descriptors or modifiers (reliability, responsiveness, empathy).

According to Alexandris et al. (2004) several studies in a number of different service industries have proven the importance of the human beings involved in quality of service delivery. They also emphasized the importance of the physical environment, based on a variety of studies. Brady and Cronin (2001) themselves states that the dimension of outcome quality needs to be subject to further research. Several researchers state that outcomes that have long-term impacts and yield benefits first after some time are more difficult for the customer to evaluate (Howat et al., 2005b; Robinson & Taylor, 2003)**.**

3.3 With whom, how and when? A toolbox for evaluation

This section will review literature which is proposed to be important, both as basic knowledge, but also as a toolbox when creating a model and approach for evaluation of service quality.

3.3.1 With whom? - A systems approach

According to Grönroos (1984) it is a pre-requisite to know what customers in the studied market are searching for as well as what they are evaluating in their relation with the service company. Only when this is known it will be possible to identify more important aspects and develop a strong and successful model for evaluation of service quality and quality improvements. Consuming a service, like education, requires a large amount of customer involvement due to the simultaneous production and consumption processes. During the process each customer evaluates experiences and identifies activities and factors that have potential for improvement (Kotzé & du Plessis, 2003).

Since the student is the direct recipient of the educational output it is simple to identify the student as the customer (Motwani & Kumar, 1997). This subject is well debated and both agreed and not agreed upon (Redding, 2005; Bejou, 2005; Rolfe, 2002; Yunker & Yunker, 2003). In several countries such as UK students pay a share of the total cost of their education. This increases the tendency to refer to a student as a customer (Eagle & Brennan, 2007). A number of authors criticize the student-as-a-customer concept and emphasize that students do not always pay the full cost of their education (Emery et al., 2001; Sirvanci, 1996). Furthermore, treating students as customer as in the sense that "the customer is always right" could be a hazardous and naive game to play. Intentions may be good but also may result in what is on the contrary to the best interest of the student itself (Eagle & Brennan, 2007). Redding (2005) express this by explaining that students decides to attend a certain education program because they lack objectivity and experience to understand the field of study which they have chosen.

Treating the "student-as-customer" needs to be evaluated and well-reasoned as well as interpreted in a way that suits the actual setting. Failing on the interpretation, the "student-as-a-customer" idea is likely to be counter-productive (Eagle & Brennan, 2007). According to Scott (1999) and Pitman (2000) students are not the only customers when it comes to education. Others who might have entitlements include the government, families (who may assist with educational costs), future employers and society in general. This is due to the contribution of graduates to the society and economy in general, since a better educated workforce

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contributes to ensuring a stronger economy (Pitman, 2000; Redding, 2005). Owlia and Aspinwall (1996) ranked students as the most important customers in higher education, followed by employers, government, faculties and families. The question about multiple customers or stakeholders could be overcome by employing a systems approach and by considering requirements of key stakeholders. Applying this kind of approach requires considerations of the demands and needs of customers as well as other stakeholders when executing business processes (Asif et al., 2013). Furthermore involving several stakeholders is considered as crucial since Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2003) suggest that each stakeholder group has its own definition of quality.

3.3.2 How? - Methods and techniques for evaluation

Quality measures which are widely used when producing different products are not as applicable when measuring service quality. Service measures are more difficult to define, but can definitely be developed through interactions with customers. By applying a strategy for continuous customer focused research the results can be compared against internal measures, and thereby the appropriateness of current measures can be tested (Motwani & Kumar, 1997).

Voice of the Customer (VOC) is a beneficial technique for development of products and services. This technique enables information which makes it possible to gain a more detailed understanding about customers' requirements. This includes information regarding both development of a new product or service as well as improvements of an existing one. Moreover, it enables the collection of ideas in the customers own words (Gaskin et al., 2010).

Course evaluation is a commonly used tool for assessment of quality in education. It aims at evaluating the education to be able to improve the quality of it and thereby also improve the feasibility for students to learn. Furthermore, evaluation of this kind is regarded as a way to involve students as well as increase their participation and feeling of empowerment in relation to their own education. Student involvement and participation is a quality issue and the individual student is a vital resource in the process of developing education programs (Arvidsson, 2007). A well-conducted course evaluation is an important contribution when working with quality improvements and development of education. It makes it possible to address shortcomings and areas of improvement, but also to highlight the strengths of the organization (Bessman & Mårtensson, 1991). Evaluation should include not only pure academic processes (curriculum design, evaluation and teaching) but also administrative processes (facility management, student enrolment) (Asif et al., 2013).

To have in mind is also that individuals in a non-homogeneous group often have a larger variation of experiences and differences in their knowledge base than individuals in a more homogeneous group. Regarding such a non-homogeneous group awareness about the individuals' expectations become more difficult to predict and thus even more important to gain knowledge about (Redding, 2005). Service quality will be perceived as low when performance does not meet their expectations. Furthermore the perceived service quality increases when performance exceeds their expectations (Oliver, 1980). With this knowledge in mind it may be valuable to take these different backgrounds in to consideration, if possible, when designing and analyzing the results from a performed evaluation (Redding, 2005).

Despite the purpose of course evaluations and evaluation of quality, the response rates often are surprisingly low. One of the greatest reasons for this is the lack of feedback. According to Arvidsson (2007) several earlier reports shows that students criticize and are dissatisfied with the lack of feedback and effect after the evaluation has been carried out. Receiving feedback makes students feel that they are respected and that the effort invested in performing the evaluation is to a larger extent perceived as meaningful. Feedback is therefore of utmost importance since it indicates respect for the students and their opinions (Arvidsson, 2007).

The method being most advantageous when performing an evaluation depends on e.g. which and how many resources you have, how big your population is and what you want to evaluate (Bessman & Mårtensson, 1991). There are different possible forms of evaluation such as:

- Course meetings
- Diary
- Interview (individual)
- Interview (group)
- Survey, paper and pen (individual questionnaire)
- Web-based survey (individual questionnaire)

There is no rule on exactly how to design an evaluation process. The most important factor to take into account is what kind of course that is being evaluated and which method that is most applicable and relevant for evaluation of that specific course (Arvidsson, 2007).

The ability to measure every dimension relevant for the service process is essential for a service company. Each dimension should be distinguished and evaluated separately since the company performance may vary between different areas within the company. In this way resources can be allocated to where it is needed the most. Still it is important to keep a comprehensive view and to consider the development of the whole company (Johnson et al., 1995).

3.3.3 When? - Time and frequency

Course evaluations may also be referred to as either formative or summative. The differences between the two are affiliated to when they are performed and the purpose of them. Formative evaluation is performed during a course with the purpose to improve it (Arvidsson, 2007). Summative evaluation is performed when the course is finished for course assessment or evaluation of the outcome of the course (Appelqvist & Arvidsson, 2004; Arvidsson, 2007).

According to Bessman & Mårtensson (1991) course evaluations are not to be performed only in the end of a course, since this delimits the possibility for involved parts to get their voice heard. Due to this, evaluations should be performed continuously to increase the contribution to positive development. According to Arvidsson (2007) the performance of continuous evaluations contributes to ensuring quality. Moreover, these evaluations should include different aspects of the evaluated service, as well as it should involve as many stakeholders and thereby different perspectives as possible. By applying a strategy directed towards continuous research on customer satisfaction, each result can be compared against internal measures, and thereby the relevance of the currently applied measures can be tested (Motwani and Kumar, 1997).

3.4 The theoretical framework: Important concepts

Based on the literature study a number of concepts important for the foundation of further research were found. All models presented in section 3.2 emphasize the importance of quality in interactions and relations during service delivery. The latter two bring up the physical environment as an important dimension and Grönroos's model as well as Brady's and Cronin's model pinpoints the outcome of the service delivery. While the process of service delivery, including interactions and relations, has gained much attention, the dimension of outcome quality seems to be less explored. Summarizing presented models result in three important quality dimensions:

Dimension one: Focuses on the role of employees in service delivery (helpfulness, trustworthiness, experience and knowledge, how the customer is treated, friendliness, attitude and response to customer needs).

Dimension two: Focuses on the importance of the physical environment (design of facilities, equipment, atmosphere, communication materials, scent, temperature and other customers' behaviors and interaction among customers).

Dimension three: Focuses on the outcome quality or technical quality. The result of the provided service. E.g. waiting time, which in this case could be translated to "time before achieving the first job". Outcomes which have long-term impacts, like education most probably have are more difficult for customers to evaluate (Howat et al., 2005b; Robinson and Taylor, 2003). This makes Outcome Quality a particularly interesting dimension.

Other important aspects obtained from the three models complements in section 3.2:

• **The performance-to-expectations gap: Due to a more customer oriented approach this** concept is seen as an important foundation for evaluation of service quality (Oliver, 1980; Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1988). It also will be wise to have in mind that the students constitute a non-homogeneous group that may have a large variation of expectations depending on knowledge base and experience (Redding, 2005).

• **The reputation or company image:** This aspect should be taken into consideration, both individually and in relation to marketing (Brunswick, 1952; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1982; Grönroos, 1984).

When turning to section 3.3 aspects believed to be important for this thesis are:

• **Voice of the Customer or VOC:** The VOC is a beneficial, customer-based technique for development of products and services (Gaskin et al., 2010). Furthermore, there are different methods for performing evaluations, such as interviews and surveys (Arvidsson, 2007).

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- **Definition of quality and applied quality dimensions:** According to Stone-Romero et al. (1997) researchers leave out the important and, for the study, vital part of defining quality properly when they use the concept. According to Sousa and Voss (2002) future studies should aim at adapting the definition of quality and its dimensions to the organization in focus.

- **The "student-as-a-customer" concept and the systems approach regarding involved stakeholders:** Only asking the students and assume that "the customer is always right" could be very naive and this may result in what is on the contrary to the best interest of the student itself (Eagle & Brennan, 2007). Applying a systems approach takes the demands and needs of several customers/stakeholders into consideration when improving and executing business processes (Asif et al., 2013).

- **Feedback:** Contributes to higher response rates when performing an evaluation, as well as increases the feeling of importance for the ones contributing with their experiences (Arvidsson, 2007).

- **Time and frequency:** These two aspects matter when performing evaluations (Arvidsson, 2007; Bessman & Mårtensson, 1991). Arvidsson (2007) states that continuous evaluation contributes to ensuring quality. Similar, Motwani and Kumar (1997) pinpoints that when applying a strategy for continuous research on customer satisfaction, results can be compared with available internal measures, and thereby the relevance of currently used measures can be tested.

- **To have in mind:** Focus on each dimension individually, allocate resources and effort to where it is primarily needed, still never stop having a comprehensive view (Johnson et al., 1995).

The above concepts were used as a foundation for my further studies. They were taken into consideration during the development of the interview structures used during the initial semi-structured interviews. Voice of the Customer was applied as the major method.

4. Empirical findings, part one

In the following sections 4.1-4.3 the results from the first part of the empirical study are presented. In section 4.3 the initial model is visualized and important aspects are explained.

4.1 Interviews, voice of the student part one

Meeting the former students led to a greater understanding and increased knowledge about the studied company and its education program. In this section important aspects for development of the initial model are presented.

4.1.1 Company image and reputation

What became obvious after performing the 11 interviews was that students attend the education program due to very different purposes and that the group is very non-homogeneous when it comes to prior knowledge in the studied area. They have knowledge equivalent to e.g. being a physiotherapist, student studying to become a teacher, an experienced sports coach and a novice having no prior knowledge at all. Some of them attend the education program in order to have the possibility to work full time or part time as a PT or to start their own business, while others use their education as a complement in another profession. I came to the understanding that the level of prior knowledge affects the student's perception of education quality, since the students' with a larger amount of prior knowledge reason more critically around the different aspects brought up during the interview.

The reason for the students' choice of education company also varied. The three most frequently mentioned reasons for picking the studied company for their studies was:

- **Word-of-Mouth (WoM):** A friend or relative which has attended or heard of the education company. The company seems to have a strong reputation.

- **SATS gym:** Information available at the gym and the student was/is an employee or client within this gym.

- **Price:** The student did choose the education company that offered the best price (scholarship/discount due to studies within a certain university or employment at SATS).

Students that had compared the contents and structure of the education program with similar education programs within other education companies could not base their decision on this comparison since they found them to be quite alike. The conclusion from this was that the company has a strong reputation and often positive Word-of-Mouth, but no real differentiation

compared to other companies regarding marketing efforts. However, for those attending the education program after being informed (WoM) all of them had a mainly positive image of the education program. Also, those who associated the company and education program with SATS had certain expectations. What kind of expectations that were common and how well the education program lived up to these was further investigated in the empirical study part two, section 5.1.5.

4.1.2 The most discussed topics

To elaborate on the quality dimension theory by Garvin (1984) it was important to investigate which quality dimensions which were of greatest importance for the students' perceived quality. The most important dimensions from theory were included in several of the questions asked during the interviews and the topics discussed during these interviews are presented below. Teachers and the contents or structure of the education program ended up being the two most frequently discussed ones.

TEACHERS: The overall impression of the educating teachers was very positive. Still, one important issue to investigate further was the statement about teachers educating the same subject contradicted each other (which one should the students listen to?). When looking at the positive side the most frequently mentioned dimensions were knowledge and competence (often emphasized together) as well as pedagogic skills. Furthermore, the students stated that they appreciate teachers that are inspiring, helpful, experienced, easy to talk to, good listeners and which have a positive attitude.

CONTENTS OR STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAM: The major topic was the appreciated distribution of theory and practice. A majority of the former students also emphasized that they really appreciated the final practice in which they had the opportunity to practice on external clients. Several expressed that the education company should extend this part since it is a good preparation and way to build confidence for the soon to come professional role as a PT. Also other important subjects was mentioned to be to briefly taught, subjects that are an important foundation for the future profession. Contents and structure of seemed to be a fundamental topic for several reasons, primarily in relation to the competence and knowledge of the soon to be PT:s and thereby their ability to respond to existing demands. Inconsistency between what had been taught at the education company, and what was later taught when attending the job introduction at a few of the training companies had been identified. This affected the concerned students' perceived quality.

The interviewed students regard the education program as very intense and the majority of them stated that they would have preferred to lengthen the period of education to be able to reflect and learn in a more favorable way. Moreover, several of them also stated that the contents was really good but also that they would have preferred to go deeper into each subject, since this would have been a good contribution to their basic knowledge and credibility when meeting clients. Furthermore, this would contribute to an increased confidence, which is fundamental in order to succeed.

All 11 students were asked what, in their opinion, is the largest challenge when working as a PT. Two answers were frequently mentioned:

- Being or becoming enough of a sales person to establish oneself on the market and by that being able to make it financially (outcome). Several of the interviewed students think that the education program does not prepare the students enough for this.

- The ability to plan and individualize a fitness program as well as communicate in a successful and motivating way with each client (outcome).

ADMINISTRATION: On questions concerning the administration of the education program the students perceived the information received as satisfactory and the employees' attitude as collaborative and service minded. No certain shortcoming could be distinguished.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT: Comments about this topic was rarer, partly depending on the questions asked, but also rare in answers to the more open-ended questions and follow up questions. Mentioned was the importance of good ventilation within facilities. A number of students stated that classmates also affect the experience of the education period.

EXAMINATIONS: Examinations pass or fail each student. Both practical and theoretical examinations are seen as necessary since the profession demands both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. There were many positive opinions about the practical examinations. Identified problems or obscurities were more often mentioned in relation to the theoretical examinations. This subject was kept in mind for further investigation.

No aspects causing differentiation between education programs in different cities could be distinguished.

4.2 Voice of the employee

To be able to decide how the education company perceives their education program in relation to above collected information from former students, it was of great interest to arrange an interview with its Quality Manager. Below the Quality Manager's definition of quality as well as the company's current model for evaluation are presented. Information regarding the current model for evaluation was also collected through an e-mail interview with Education Officer 2.

4.2.1 Definition of quality

This is a summary of the Quality Manager's views about quality in relation to education:

- An education program **suitable for everyone** interested in working with nutrition, training/exercise and health from a holistic perspective.

- An education program where the students **achieve both their own and our goals**.

- Pedagogues doing their job (see bullet-point 1 and 2) and which have a good subject-specific as well as a "communication-specific" understanding.

- All teachers/pedagogues should work actively within the profession which students are studying to become a part of.

- Evaluation and improvements depending on the result. This also includes both self- assessment and group assessment within the team of teachers.

The Quality Manager was also asked to define quality in terms of the profession. This is a summary of the received answer:

- The PT has got a level of knowledge that is sufficient enough to meet as many different kinds of clients/interests/wishes/goal-settings as possible. This usually means that the PT has got a longer education as well as his/her own earlier experience.

- The PT has an attitude which means that he or she works to achieve what is best for the client and has the ability to listen and help the client based on his or her condition, requirements and goal-settings. The PT works in a goal-oriented way and constantly strives to develop in order to improve the results. Self-assessment is important for good quality.

4.2.2 Internally: An on-going process

Internal evaluation and self-assessment is an on-going process within the education company. These processes for evaluation are known to the author, but they are not to be included in this thesis since this was requested by the company.

4.2.3 Students: Survey-based evaluation

Currently the education company evaluates their education program by performing a survey. Until the year of 2012 this survey has been performed as a written questionnaire with paper and pen, but from the middle of year 2013 this survey has been made computer based (Quality Manager, 2013-06-03). The current occasion and frequency for evaluation is one time in the end of education period (Education Manager 2, 2013-08-01).

4.2.4 Potential employers: Indefinite contact

Meeting the potential employer's demands will be utmost importance for the educated PT. Brief discussions with potential employers had taken place but no contact had been completely established regarding feedback and cooperation. However, according to the Quality Manager (2013-06-03) no special trend concerning deficiencies within their education program in relation to the employer's demands had been identified so far. Additional research on the views of the employer stakeholder group was due to above information believed to broaden or verify the information given by the Quality Manager.

4.3 An initial model

By relying on the VOC-technique, a systems approach and studied literature the most important dimensions of quality (so far) could be proposed:

- **Employee Interaction Quality (EIQ)**
- **Outcome Quality (OQ)**
- **Physical Environment Quality (PEQ)**
- **Structure and Contents Quality (SCQ)**

These are the dimensions proposed to be of great importance when evaluating service quality in private education. The initial model presented in figure 7 illustrates that each quality dimension states something on its own, still all four of them constitutes one part of an important totality. Placed in the core of the model is the definition of quality since addressing this concept in an appropriate way is highly essential for this kind of study.
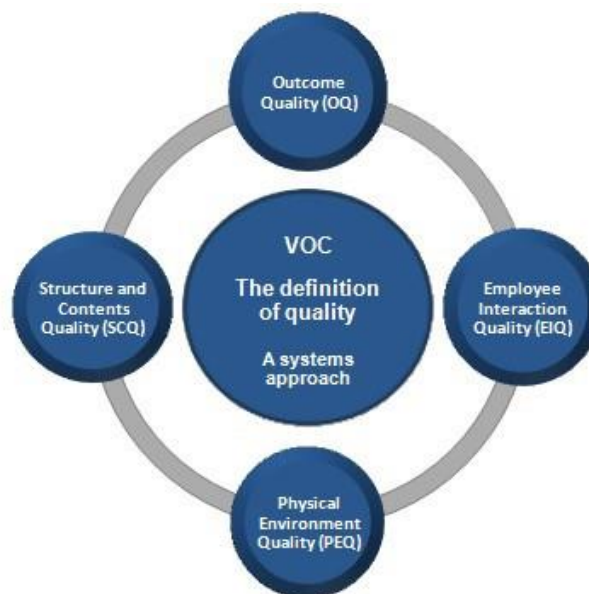
Figure 7. The initial model

Outcome Quality was proposed to be of great importance in education since the result created during the service process is supposed to "earn someone's living". Outcome quality is somewhat the result or product of the other three dimensions.

Also a number of sub-dimensions could be revealed. These were summarized and categorized in relation to the corresponding quality dimension in table 2. These sub-dimensions were left to be investigated further in the empirical study, part two. Some additional proposed to be important aspects are also presented in table 3.

Table 2. A summary of important dimensions and sub-dimensions obtained in the empirical study, part one.

Quality dimension	Additional information	Sub-dimensions
Employee Interaction Quality	Comparable with Grönroos (1984) functional quality, Brady's and Cronin's (2001) interaction quality as well as dimensions of the SERVQUAL model.	TEACHERS - Knowledge and competence (I+L) - Pedagogic skills (I) - Helpfulness (I+L) - Experience (I+L) - Positive attitude (I+L) - Humorous (I) - Communication (I) - Good listener (I) - Inspiring (I) - Trustworthiness (L) - Friendliness (L) - Response to customer needs (L)
		ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF - Collaborative (I) - Service minded (I) - Professional (I) - Engaged (I) - Flexible (I) - Delivery of information (I) - Trustworthiness (L) - Friendliness (L) - Response to customer needs (L) - Knowledge (L) - Helpfulness (L) - Experience (L) - Positive attitude (L)
Outcome Quality	Comparable with Grönroos (1984) technical quality and Brady's and Cronin's (2001) outcome quality.	- Knowledge (I) - Confidence (I) - Understanding of the profession and its demands e.g. being/becoming enough of a sales person (I) - Communication skills (I) - Sufficient level of knowledge to be able to meet a wide range of clients (I)* - "What is best for the client attitude" (I)* - A will and strive to constantly develop (I)* - Achieving a job (waiting time) (L)
Physical Environment Quality	Directly transferred from Brady's and Cronin's (2001) model.	- Ventilation/fresh air (I+L) - Location (I) - Class mates attitude and behavior (I+L) - Design of facilities (L) - Lighting (L) - Equipment (L) - Atmosphere (L)
Structure and Contents Quality	This dimension is proposed to be of great importance when evaluating an education program and its different parts.	- Distribution of theory and practice (I) - To generate knowledge and competence, good preparation for profession (I) - Enough time available to be able to learn (related to confidence and preparation) (I) - "Consistency with market demands" (I)

(I) Sub-dimensions emerging during interviews with former students

(I)* Sub-dimensions emerging during the interview with the Quality Manager

(L) Sub-dimension mentioned in literature

Table 3. Additional aspects obtained in the empirical study, part one.

Additional dimension	Additional information and findings
Marketing, company image and WoM	WoM, creation of expectations. No real differentiation compared to other companies regarding marketing efforts. At least nothing that is very much visible to the potential customers/stakeholders. Customers have a mostly positive image of the company.
Price	Price are suggested to be one of these aspects which will be taken into consideration since other aspects cannot be compared.
Performance-to-expectations gap	Crucial for the overall experience regarding service quality. Expected service compared to perceived service.
Quality Assessment	Examinations. Most criticism directed towards the theoretical examinations.
Feedback, performed evaluations	Crucial for motivation and learning processes. Existing but inadequate relations between the education company and potential employers. Knowledge about feedback delivered to former students (after conducting the survey) unknown so far.
With whom?, When? and How?	Customer-based approach, time and frequency, method

A comparison between expected- and perceived service should be included in the model and approach (The *performance-to-expectations gap)* since a gap between these have a direct effect on customers' perception of the total service quality. Derived from existing literature were the following three factors and their impact on an individual's expectations of service quality:

* *Marketing*
* *Company image*
* *Word-of-Mouth*

Awareness due to evaluation and a constant interplay between what is communicated and what is delivered and thereby experienced by the students is a desired goal to up reach.

Furthermore, the questions discussed above (*With whom?, When? and How?*) was seen as a fundamental contribution to the proposed model. The student was defined to be one of the customers or stakeholders of the studied service. Other identified important stakeholders involved were employees within the company.

So far the potential employer had not been involved much or asked to deliver feedback which would be useful when improving e.g. the structure of the education program or assessing the personal trainers. However, the internal evaluation and follow up seemed to work fine. The importance of *feedback* was kept in mind as well as the *price* issue and the question about examinations and *quality assurance*.

5. Empirical findings, part two

This section contains the findings made in the empirical study, part two. The results from the computer-based survey are presented in section 5.1. Section 5.2 reveals the potential employers' views on quality within the PT-profession.

5.1 Computer-based survey, voice of the student part two

The computer-based survey was designed based on the findings made in part one of the empirical study. Furthermore, the aim was to ask questions which would contribute with important information to be able to answer the research questions of this thesis.

5.1.1 Verification for the use of a system based approach

One of the questions (Q17, Appendix 5) were directed towards the student in order to find out whether he or she considered himself/herself as well aware about the knowledge and skills needed in the profession as a PT before attending the education program. The result is presented in figure 8 below.
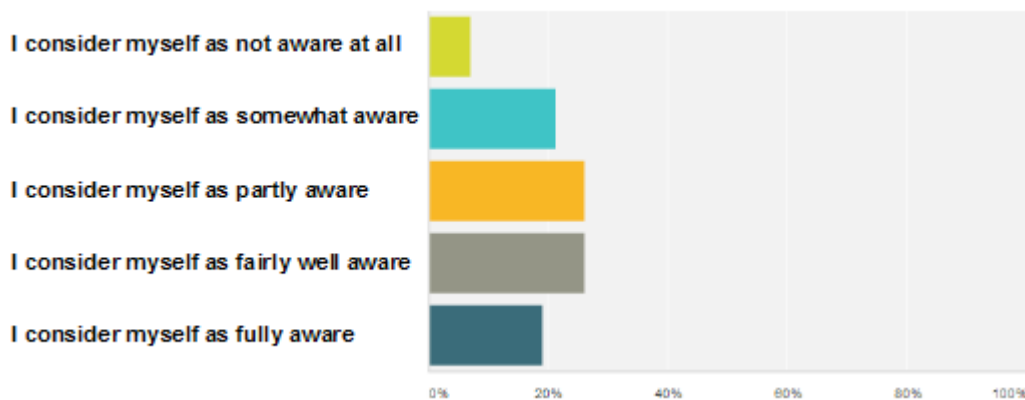
Figure 8. The answers received on the question about whether the student considered himself or herself as informed about the knowledge and skills needed in the profession as a PT before attending the education program.

This result indicates that students considered themselves aware to various extent. The conclusion drawn from this was that students do not always know what their education should contain, as well as what the profession implies until they have gained some work experience. By looking at figure 8 the importance of involving several stakeholder groups could be verified.

The students' prior knowledge and experience proved to be of various levels within the group of students, making the group quite non-homogeneous. Prior knowledge and experience also affects the above question. The spread is not that strange since the individuals in this group

were born between 1959 and 1993. They may have worked within another profession, have graduated from a university education, have an on-going university education or they have recently finished their high school education. More than 50% (50,7%) of the respondents worked within the PT-profession and 9,9% were looking for a job as a PT. 31,0% did not actively work as a PT (for different reasons) and the remaining part of students did not report their occupation, but that they possess a PT license.

5.1.2 Collecting student experiences, how and when

In order to collect information about how and when to perform evaluations with the student group the students were asked to rate a number of alternatives (Q27, Appendix 5). The results from these ratings are presented in Table 4 and Table 5. Two different methods for evaluation were the most preferred ones based on the highest percentage of former students choosing these methods prior to other available alternatives. These two methods were:

• Oral, individual evaluation together with person from the education company

• Written, individual evaluation, questionnaire (paper and pen)

Table 4. A comparison between different methods for student evaluation of the education program, showing the students choice of their preferred method for evaluation.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Diary	17,6%	14,7%	14,7%	14,7%	2,9%	35,3%
Oral individual evaluation together with person from the education company	26,5%	11,8%	14,7%	23,5%	17,7%	5,9%
Oral small group evaluation with person from the education company attending	8,8%	20,6%	20,6%	23,5%	23,5%	2,9%
Oral small group evaluation (students only). Opinions documented and handed in	14,7%	2,9%	29,4%	14,7%	17,7%	20,6%
Written individual evaluation, questionnaire (paper and pen)	26,5%	17,6%	8,8%	14,7%	23,5%	8,8%
Written individual evaluation, questionnaire (computer-based)	5,9%	32,4%	11,8%	8,8%	14,7%	26,5%

When asking the students which occasion and frequency that would make them contribute with the largest amount of valuable information (Q26, Appendix 5) one alternative received the highest rating:

• 40% of the respondents stated that shorter, regular evaluations during the education program (in class hours) would be the most successful occasion/frequency for performing evaluations.

All ratings from this question are visualized in Table 5.

Table 5. The table shows the students views regarding which occasion and frequency that will contribute with the largest amount of valuable information.

Answer, alternatives	Answers, percentage
Shorter, regular evaluations during the education program (in class hours)	40,0%
Shorter, regular evaluations during the education program (outside class hours)	20,0%
One large evaluation when finishing the education program (in class hours)	25,7%
One large evaluation when finishing the education program (outside class hours)	14,3%

The conclusion is that evaluation should be performed in the form of shorter, regular evaluations during the education program (in class hours). These evaluations should be performed individually, either orally together with a person from the education company or as a written, individual evaluation, questionnaire (paper and pen). Students obviously prefer evaluations performed during class hours and state that they would contribute with the largest amount of information when performing them individually.

5.1.3 Feedback

The evaluation performed with the involved student group was performed in the end of their education period, as an individual questionnaire with paper and pen in class hours (Quality Manager, 2013-06-03). Due to the choice of occasion and method the response rate was assumed to be high. Still, the amount of information and engagement put in by each student often varies. One important reason for motivating students to deliver important information is delivery of feedback and effect after the evaluation has been carried out. In the studied case the major part of the (responding) students stated that they had not received any feedback (Q28, Appendix 5) neither on their own group's evaluation or other former students' evaluations (Figure 9).
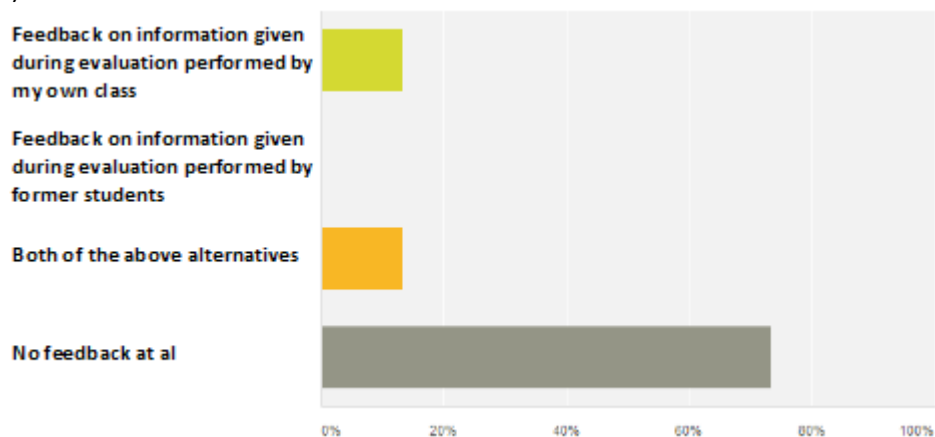
Figure 9. Frequency of received feedback on evaluations made by students

5.1.4 Evaluation based on experience

A question that was raised during the initial semi-structured interviews was related to work experience. If you never have worked as a PT, do you have enough experience to answer some of the questions asked during an evaluation? One example is questions about the education program in relation to demands within the profession. Maybe it would be wise to turn to former students now actively working as PT:s for evaluation of certain quality dimensions?

The Quality Manager (2013-06-03) briefly mentioned during the interview that some former students had been contacted a while ago. To investigate this further one question within the computer-based survey (Q30, Appendix 5) asked the students if the company had contacted them for further evaluation. 20,0% of the respondents answered that the company had contacted them for further evaluation. 80,0% answered that the company had not contacted them and out of these 22,9% stated that if the company would contact them they would gladly participate. In order to further investigate the importance of performing some kind of evaluation with former students the student was asked if his/her opinion about the education program currently was the same as the one he/she had the day when the education program ended (Q29, Appendix 5). Eight different alternatives were offered and the answers were divided according to table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of answers regarding the student's current opinion about the education program compared to the opinion he/she had when just finished it.

Answer, alternatives	Answers, percentage
Yes, exactly the same	48,6%
No. it has changed a bit (towards a more positive view)	11,4%
No. it has changed a bit (towards a more negative view)	25,7%
No. it has changed a lot (towards a more positive view)	5,7%
No. it has changed a lot (towards a more negative view)	5,7%
No. it has changed substantially (towards a more positive view)	2,9%
No. it has changed substantially (towards a more negative view)	0,0%
I have not finished the education program	0,0%

As the table shows 48,6% had exactly the same view as before, leaving 51,4% that stated that their view had changed in some way. 42,9% of the respondents of this question were active within the PT-profession. Out of these slightly more than half had the same view as before and for remaining part the view had changed either towards a more positive or a more negative view. The conclusion drawn here was that evaluations therefore should be performed with former students, as well as current ones.

5.1.5 Expected and perceived service

To be able to find out what most expectations were about as well as how well the education program lived up to these the following question and statement were asked/given (Q10-11, Appendix 5):

1. What expectations did you have regarding the education program before your studies were initiated?
2. The education program met the expectations I had it before I started studying.

The respondent was allowed to leave several answers and the results were:

- 55% of the respondents reported expectations about outcome dimensions (knowledge and security/self confidence in their profession)

- 7% reported expectations about teachers and relations (Knowledge, competence, pedagogic skills)

- 7% reported expectations about the physical environment (entertaining, fun)

- 2,5% reported expectations about the structure (distribution of practical learning)

- 43% state some kind of general level of their expectations (e.g. very high, high, none), statements which indicated that the majority of the students had high or very high expectations (66%). The remaining part reported pretty high (11%), none (17%) or unclear (6%) expectations.

An overview of the level of met expectations is visualized in figure 10.
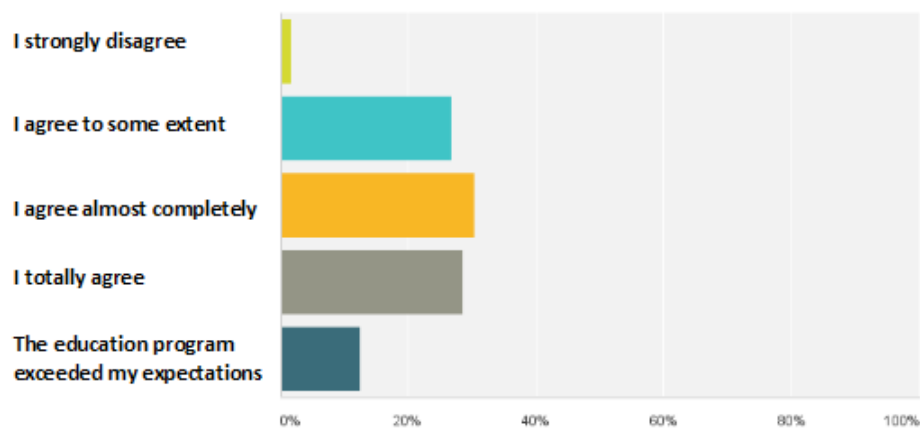
Figure 10. The answers received on the question regarding if the education program   met the expectations the student had before he or she initiated the studies.

Respondents experienced a varied level of met expectations. By combining the answers from Q10 and Q11 it would be possible to further investigate areas of improvement. Moreover, the students were allowed to leave comments about their expectations, since these could contribute with valuable information that otherwise would have been left out. Students that did leave comments about certain expectations regarding the outcome of their education often addressed structural issues. These concerned e.g. scope of studies (being too short and/or intense) or missing parts of different scopes, such as how to attract and retain customers.

By asking the above questions and encourage the students to leave comments, it was possible to identify areas of improvement. In this case the experienced performance-to-expectations gap was largest in relation to the outcome quality, but still this quality dimension is dependent on the other quality dimensions.

5.1.6 The students' definition of quality

The students were asked what they regard as quality in education (Q13, Appendix 5). There were many answers to this open-ended question, which also reflected the complexity of the concept. A model for evaluation of service quality could contain an almost unlimited amount of sub-dimensions, since all individuals perceive and thus define the concept in their own way. Still, the amount of respondents was limited and themes were recurring, thus making it possible to express a general definition of quality concerning this kind of service. This definition included:

1. Teacher's knowledge and competence, pedagogic skills included (EIQ).

2. Contents of the studied material (education program and the course literature) are up to date, correct and scientifically grounded (SCQ)

3. That the education gives them an understanding of and preparation for the future profession (OQ)

4. Suiting facilities with relevant equipment (PEQ)

5. Dedicated and driven classmates (PEQ)

6. Various approaches of learning/Advantageous distribution of theory and practice (SCQ)

7. Personalized treatment and enough time for teachers to be able to see, discuss with and help all students (A mix of EIQ, PEQ and SCQ)

8. Teachers attitude, engagement and ability to inspire (EIQ)

9. The ability of the administrative staff to distribute important information and do it on time (EIQ)

10. Enough time for learning, throwbacks, rest, studies and gain the knowledge needed to be able to perform a competent work as a personal trainer. Enough knowledge to feel confident (SCQ)

Some of the aspects were seen as more important than others, but in the end taking one away would affect the others since it is important to consider each aspect as a part of a totality.

5.1.7 Dimensions of quality

After the first part of the study it could be proposed that the interaction quality of the administrative staff was not as important as the interaction quality of the teachers. This is why the dimension regarding Employee interaction quality was divided into two different dimensions when performing the computer-based survey. Employee Teacher Interaction Quality (ETIQ) and Employee Administration Interaction Quality (EAIQ). To straighten out the order in which the students rank the different dimensions they were asked to rank the five proposed quality dimensions from 1 to 5 (Q14, Appendix 5). The results are presented below:

1. Outcome Quality (OQ)

2. Employee Interaction Quality (teachers) (ETIQ)

3. Structure and Contents Quality (SCQ)

4. Physical Environment Quality (PEQ)

5. Employee Interaction Quality (administration) (EAIQ)

In table 7 details about how the students ranked the different dimensions are visualized.

Table 7. The five quality dimensions ranked by former students

	1	2	3	4	5
The environment in which the studies are pursued	7,5%	10,0%	15,0%	60,0%	7,5%
Interactions with teachers	15,0%	37,5%	37,5%	10,0%	0,0%
Interactions with administrative staff	5,0%	12,5%	5,0%	7,5%	70,0%
The structure and contents	12,5%	22,5%	40,0%	15,0%	10,0%
The result achieved after attending the education program	60,0%	17,5%	2,5%	7,5%	12,5%

5.1.8 Sub-dimensions of quality

Below are the mentioned sub-dimensions categorized and presented. Students were asked to list a maximum of three factors which they associate with high quality in terms of the five different dimensions of quality (Q16, Appendix 5). This made it possible for the same student to leave several sub-dimensions.

The result of the education program, Outcome Quality (OQ):

- **Knowledge:** 54,5%. Several pointed out the importance of knowing how to meet the future client on the right level. This sub-dimension is also linked to the following one.

- **The education program has thought you the right things and you feel confident about this:** 22,7%. Knowledge meets expectations from the employer and market. This sub-dimension is directly linked to the dimension regarding structure.

- **Understanding of the profession:** 13,6%. Knowing and understanding what skills that will be needed and which demands the future profession will bring.

Except for the above dimensions the following sub-dimensions were also mentioned (<10% of the participants): A good job and a good employer, the ability to pass on knowledge to others, possibility of further education, status, self-confidence, happiness, competence. Since the outcome quality were seen as an interesting dimension an additional question was added to the questionnaire (Q23, Appendix 5): "Briefly describe what was most important for you to achieve due to attending the education program (result and outcome)?". These are the results:

- **Knowledge:** 46,2% (this was in line with the above result)

- **Achieving a job:** 19,2%

- **The license:** 11,5%

- **Security and confidence:** 11,5%

When comparing answers received from the same student, the majority of these corresponded to each other. This was done in order to evaluate the consistency in each student's answer.

An interesting and earlier discussed aspect which relates to the outcome quality is the performed examinations. A number of students expressed a wish for relevant and carefully designed assessment which assure quality of the ones that passes the tests and are approved to work as PT:s. This is a point of view that should be in the interest of the education company as well as the future employers, in order to further secure the quality within the profession.

The Employee Teacher Interaction Quality (ETIQ):

- **Knowledge and competence (pedagogic skills included):** 43,5%. Since several students mentioned knowledge and competence overlapping, these sub-dimensions constituted one single dimension.

- **Good communication skills:** 27,3%.

- **Being personal, the ability to see each and every individual:** 18,2%.

Except for above sub-dimensions the following were also mentioned (<15%): Passion for the profession, inspiring, open and good relations, the ability to express himself/herself in a clear way, encourage, being confident, feedback and how to deliver feedback, being helpful and understand how to distribute pauses.

Structure and Contents Quality (SCQ):

- **Logical structure (what, when, how) with throwback and a line of argument:** 77,8%

- **Structure and format with the purpose of optimal learning (enough time to study and learn):** 33,3%

- **A favorable distribution of theory and practice:** 16,7%

Except for above dimensions the following were mentioned (<15%): Structure gained approval for, length of classes, the possibility to individualize this when needed, interactive learning and the "right" contents.

The educational environment, Physical Environment Quality (PEQ):

- **Fresh air/good ventilation:** 44,4%

- **Fresh and clean:** 38,9%

- **Equipment of good quality:** 27,8%

- **Pleasant / nice, quiet environment:** 22,2%

- **For the mission and purpose suitable facilities:** 22,2%

- **Ergonomic chairs and tables:** 16,7%

- **Adequate lighting:** 16,7%

Except for above sub-dimensions, following are mentioned (<15%): Airy with windows, inspiring/zestful, pleasant temperature, central location, alternate, free water, free coffee, free fruits, spacious and lockers where you can store your things during your education period.

Employee Administration Interaction Quality (EAIQ):

- **Quick throwback:** 28,6%

- **Organized and punctual:** 28,6%

- **Easily accessible:** 21,4%

- **Focused and knowledgeable about how to solve problems:** 21,4%

- **Welcoming and pleasant:** 21,4%

Except for above sub-dimensions four other are mentioned (<15%): Communicate in a clear way, helpful, personalized attention, informing, professional and confident.

5.1.9 Summary of Voice of the student, part two

Different stakeholders should be involved when performing an evaluation since student does not always know what their education program should contain, as well as what the profession implies until they have worked for a while and gained some experience. It is also important to perform evaluations with former students that now are active within the profession. This is due to both change of mind regarding the education program after gaining experience and to increased knowledge about the demands from the market and employers.

Evaluations with students should be performed in the form of individual, shorter, regular evaluations during the education program (in class hours) as well as with former students working within the profession. Delivering feedback is important.

To be able to identify areas of improvement evaluation of the performance-to-expectations gap should be included as well as specially designed questions based on a more general study of the same phenomenon.

The students' definition of quality in education consisted of a number of important and interrelated aspects given in section 5.1.6. In the end it is all about the comprehensive picture, which includes several interrelated parts. The overall proposed quality dimensions and quality sub-dimensions (based on the definition of quality and most frequently mentioned sub-dimensions) are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Proposed quality dimensions and quality sub-dimensions

Rank	Quality dimension	Quality sub-dimension
1.	**Outcome Quality (OQ)**	- Knowledge - Achieving a job - Security and confidence in you knowledge and role
2.	**Employee Teacher Interaction Quality (ETIQ)**	- Knowledge and competence - Good communication skills - Being personal/Personalized attention, the ability to see each individual
3.	**Structure and Contents Quality (SCQ)**	- Logical and well-reasoned structure (what, when, how) with throwback and a line of argument - A favorable distribution of theory and practice - Structure and format with the purpose of optimal learning (time for repetition and enough of days for studying on your own, enough time for subjects which are complicated to learn)
4.	**Physical Environment Quality (PEQ)**	- Fresh air/good ventilation - Fresh and clean environment - Facilities with for the purpose suitable equipment of good quality - Atmosphere and environment that promotes learning and wellness - Like-minded classmates
5.	**Employee Administration Interaction Quality (EAIQ)**	- Quick throwback - Organized and punctual - Easily accessible - Focused and knowledgeable about how to solve problems - Welcoming and pleasant

Even though the price seems to be an important reason for choosing the education program (section 4.1.1), this aspect was left out, since it was not mentioned by the students during the discussions about quality. Price was only mentioned when asking why the student did choose the studied education program. Still, it is an important aspect to evaluate regularly.

5.2 Interviews, voice of the potential employer

Next follows the potential employer's view about quality in relation to the PT profession. This information is a contribution to the case company's knowledge about how to design their education program in order for their students to meet important demands and expectations.

5.2.1 Definition of quality

Below follows a compilation of the three recruiters' answers regarding the definition of quality in relation to the PT profession:

- The major definition mentioned by all three recruiters: Knowledge and ability to lead the client towards expected and wished results and thus meeting demands from many different types of clients, both regarding exercise and communication.

- The interpersonal part (the coaching and supportive role). Summarized: If the PT can convey a delightful workout experience.

- The PT is required to have basic knowledge, but also having own thoughts and ideas in the context of the work are a preferable characteristic.

- When a client returns to exercise with the PT again and again, thus, when he or she really wants to continue to work with this particular PT.

5.2.2 Qualities for employment

Above described qualities recurred during the discussion about which qualities that are sought when hiring a PT. In addition the following qualities were also brought up:

In line with the general definition one of the most important qualities are social competence Recruiter 3 (2013-08-22) says that this is the most important characteristic in the profession. A PT has to have the ability to work with members in all ages, with different kinds of problems or goals, belonging to different social groups and having various job assignments. In order to be a successful PT, the ability to deal with all different types of target groups is fundamental. Recruiter 2 (2013-08-22) says that a PT has to be responsive to other people, have a good judge of character and be a chameleon in order to meet all kinds of individuals. A PT has to have a genuine interest in people and what is best for the client. Communication is vital in this profession and thus a PT has to be both a good listener and to handle a lot of communication. Thus, communication is something the PT needs to practice (Recruiter 2, 2013-08-22; Recruiter 3, 2013-08-22). The ability to be a good listener includes prioritization and "detection" of the client's needs. If the PT is a good listener and good at asking follow-up questions, he or she will

receive a lot of information during a discussion with the client (or when performing a needs analysis). If not the interview often becomes short and followed by a failed needs analysis and unfortunately also failing to achieve the goal (Recruiter 3, 2013-08-22).

Basic knowledge is a pre-requisite for all three recruiters. Experience in the area is preferred but not fundamental. Fundamental is however that the PT has attended and passed one of the education programs. Since training Company 2 has their own education program passing this basic education program as well as the following selection is a pre-requisite. Still, it is seen as positive if the individual also attended one of the other schools before this. Recruiter 3 (2013-08-22) says that everything a PT learns should be scientifically based. When wanting to be a successful PT, now as well as in the future, continuous education is a prerequisite. Except for the basic knowledge Recruiter 2 (2013-08-22) mentions that it is preferred that the PT have some kind of specialization. Different fields of specialization such as strength training, gentle forms of exercise or endurance training are preferred qualifications. Also diversity in terms of e.g. gender and age are favorable. A perceived pattern by Recruiter 3 (2013-08-22) is that PT:s that are fully booked year after year have reached a personal maturity. This means that they are self-confident and stand up for their message and the creation of their own philosophy. Their work is based on scientific information and thus they are able to answer those questions a client may have.

In Training Company 1 the profile of demands in terms of the formal qualifications was mostly about the PT-education and sales-orientation. Then, because the profession is much about dealing with human beings, characteristics such as communication skills were brought up as fundamental (Recruiter 1, 2013-08-19). Recruiter 3 (2013-08-22) says that the ability to "sell on the surface" is important and also very closely related to the social competence. Still this recruiter stress that this does not mean that the PT run around the surface asking everyone if they want to buy personal training. This is more about wanting to help people, offer service, to be open to people and walk around the training area. Recruiter 1 (2013-08-19) defines sales-orientation as having the tools to perform different tests and functional analyses, not imposing exercise on people. It is more about quick ways of showing what a PT is and what they can do. In Training Company 2 this skill is not as important since this is a non-profit company.

According to Recruiter 2 (2013-08-22) a PT should be organized, accurate and have administrative ability. This is important since the job includes handling a lot of bookings and helping clients creating a plan or fitness program. Also the PT should have respect for the client's time. Pedagogical competence or the ability to teach the client things in a good way and

simplify the message is another important qualification. The PT should be able to explain and convert expertise into very simple means. A client wants to exercise and reach some form of result, thus the PT do not have time to explain really complicated things. Furthermore, the ability to understand the exercise and how demanding it is for the client is an important quality. The PT should also have the ability to perform the exercise himself/herself (Recruiter 3, 2013-08-22).

All three recruiters emphasized that some of the mentioned qualities may be difficult to learn during a course (e.g. social competence), since these are obtained with life experience and time. Furthermore, qualities like social competence, the ability to listen and personal maturity are interrelated. This is about the PT being confident in his or her own personality (Recruiter 3, 2013-08-22). However, the most advantageous way to improve these qualities was believed to be by practicing it during a role-play or practice with external customers.

5.2.3 Evaluation and feedback, education company and employer

All three recruiters expressed interest in contributing with feedback to the companies educating PT:s, but they had not been contacted by any of them. One recruiter emphasized the common goal of educating skilled PT:s and establishing these on the market. Cooperation between the training companies and the education company was believed to be rewarding, since employees within the training company have knowledge about which kind of PT that often are successful and if any new trend will emerge soon. Thus, they have knowledge about which qualities a PT should possess and how the training company could design their education program in order to stay up to date in a rapidly changing marked climate.

The lack of communication and feedback has had several downsides both regarding contradictions or inconsistency and loss of important information. The exact nature of these identified problems will not be brought up more in detail in this thesis. However, an important aspect that was identified was the missing link between the educating companies and the employers or training companies. Another important aspect mentioned by the recruiters was that some kind of selection process following the applications would be preferred. All three recruiters agreed that background knowledge and experience matters. Also the need for an increased amount of practical training was expressed. By adding more practical training a large amount of common mistakes made by recently graduated PT:s would be avoided. An extended amount of practice involving external clients was also a discussed topic during the interviews with the former students (section 4.1.2). Above described ways of increasing quality of the PT:s are also a contribution to the earlier discussion about examinations and quality assessment.

One of the challenges brought up by the students was becoming enough of a sales person to establish oneself on the market. In addition to this, two out of three recruiters mentioned that PT:s could be better prepared for the sales-oriented part of the profession. So, the students and the employers shared the same experience, still the employees within the education company are the ones making the decisions regarding the structure and contents of the education program. This finding supported the proposed recommendation about linking all these three thoroughly together by establishing a cooperation.

5.2.4 Evaluation and feedback, employer and personal trainer

56,0% of the responding former students that was currently working as an employed PT stated that their work has not been evaluated by their employer (Q8, Appendix 5). Out of these 32,0% stated that it would be valuable for them to receive feedback from their employer and clients. 44,0% of the respondents had been subject to evaluation. Out of these 40,0% had also received feedback. The three interviewed recruiters all stated that this kind of evaluation is interesting. One of the education companies had performed evaluation of some of their PT:s a while ago, but the impression was that no clear routines existed for this within any of the three training companies.

5.2.5 Collecting employer experiences, how and when

Invitations asking education companies to participate in some kind of cooperation had been made by some of the training companies regarding to their recruiters. Anyhow, all three training companies were interested in such cooperation. No certain data was collected regarding when and how these meetings should take place. However, by following the model and approach presented in Section 6, a routine for this can be found (preferable together with each individual employer).

5.2.6 Summary, Voice of the Employer

The quality definition defined by the recruiters consisted of a number of different aspects. A summary of qualities emphasized by the three recruiters is presented below:

- The ability to meet and communicate with a wide range of clients, social competence and communication skills, since the profession imply meeting a very wide range of people
- The ability to create a pleasant experience for the customer while exercising
- Goal-oriented, customer-focused attitude: Knowledge and ability to lead the client towards results and to achieve the client's goals
- Personal maturity
- A genuine interest in people: A will and interest in what is the best for the client
- Knowledge: Scientifically based or due to experience
- Tidiness, to keep things organized
- Being a good listener
- Responsiveness to other people flexible
- Experience due to background and interest
- Sales-oriented/Selling on the surface
- A will to continue educate yourself/develop
- Pedagogical competence: Ability to teach your client things in a good way and simplify your message
- Good physical ability

Since some of the characteristics are believed to be difficult to obtain by attending an education program, since these are built up due to life experience, the recruiters talked positively about implementing/using some kind of selection process following the applications from potential students. Moreover, work experience and practice with external customers was also believed to promote the development of these qualities.

Regarding evaluation and feedback the training companies expressed a positive attitude towards establishing a cooperation with education companies. Furthermore, all three recruiters had a positive attitude towards performing some kind of evaluation of their PT:s (involving clients).

As in part one of the empirical study, no certain aspects causing differentiation between education programs in different cities could be distinguished.

6. The proposed model

The proposed model is a multi-dimensional one and therefore it will be introduced divided into several detailed sections. In section 6.5. the entire proposed model and approach is presented.

6.1 The most important dimensions and sub-dimensions

Table 9 presents the proposed to be most important dimensions and sub-dimensions of quality:

Table 9. The proposed dimensions and sub-dimensions based on the definition of quality and VOC

Rank	Quality dimension	Quality sub-dimension
1.	**Outcome Quality (OQ)**	- Knowledge: Scientifically based - Achieving a job/Employability - Security and confidence in you knowledge and role - Ability to meet many different kinds of clients - Quality assurance
2.	**Employee Teacher Interaction Quality (ETIQ)**	- Knowledge and competence (pedagogic skills included) - Good communication skills - Being personal/Personalized attention, the ability to see each individual
3.	**Structure and Contents Quality (SCQ)**	- Logical and well-reasoned structure (what, when, how) with throwback and a line of argument - A favorable distribution of theory and practice - Structure and format with the purpose of optimal learning (time for repetition and enough of days for studying on your own, enough time for subjects which are complicated to learn) - Sufficient practice with external customers (important enough to be evaluated separately)
4.	**Physical Environment Quality (PEQ)**	- Fresh air/good ventilation - Fresh and clean environment - Facilities with for the purpose suitable equipment of good quality - Atmosphere and environment that promotes learning and wellness - Like-minded classmates
5.	**Employee Administration Interaction Quality (EAIQ)**	- Quick throwback - Organized and punctual - Easily accessible - Knowledgeable about how to solve problems - Welcoming

The presented dimensions and sub-dimensions of quality are proposed to be of great importance for the customers' perceived quality. By improving quality within these dimensions, reaching compliance between the company's performance and the performance that the market demands for each of them, the company will be able to reach competitive advantage.

6.2 The performance-to-expectations gap

The performance-to-expectations gap constitutes a complement to dimensions and sub-dimensions when identifying areas of improvement. Collecting and comparing data about the different stakeholders' expectations with the company's actual performance is also a way to decide whether the company's marketing efforts are raising unrealistic or realistic expectations.

6.3 With whom, when and how?

The five dimensions of quality have primarily been developed in order to primarily be evaluated by students, since these are the primary stakeholders. Still it is fundamental to include potential employers and employees. By applying a systems approach the service can be viewed from different perspectives and thus a more comprehensive evaluation can be made.

OQ: The evaluation of the Outcome Quality of the education program should be initiated the same day as the students finish their education. At this occasion the student should make an estimate on which level he or she ranks himself/herself in relation to different levels of each sub-dimension. The same questions should be distributed to those working actively within the profession when they have gained some work-experience. Also the employer should have its say about the employed PT.

ETIQ: This dimension should be evaluated from the first day to the last one by students currently attending the education program. Also self-assessment is important for each teacher.

SCQ: Evaluation of Structure and Contents Quality should be initiated the first day of the education program and paused when the student group finishes its education. This quality dimensions then should be brought up later with those students working within the profession when they have gained some work-experience. At this moment they may have changed one opinion or two. This is also a dimension that the potential employers should be able to evaluate, not least regarding the actual contents of the education program. As seen earlier (Section 5.2) recruiters identify several areas of improvement, which more or less will affect the outcome of the education program.

PEQ: This dimension should be evaluated by current students from the first day to the last one. Also employees should participate in this evaluation.

EIAQ: This dimension should be evaluated from the first day to the last one by students currently attending the education program.

Evaluations with students and former students should be performed on a regular basis, individually as a written questionnaire or orally by an employee of the education company. In this study the computer-based survey partly included former students now actively working within the profession. For the education company this group could be selected and interviewed in a more specific way. Evaluations and check-ups should also be performed with potential employers to be able to improve the Structural and contents quality in order to meet the market demands, thereby improving the Outcome quality. Furthermore, the perceived quality of the PT:s could be discussed and potential shortcomings could be identified. The qualities in section 5.2.6 should be used as a foundation for this evaluation together with the dimensions of outcome quality and structural and contents quality. It is important that the qualities perceived to be important by the employees within the education company (the major part) correspond to the qualities expected by the recruiters within the training companies. This is how the students will receive a job and how they will be able to meet the demands that lie ahead of them in their future profession. Regarding the education company and its employees, evaluations and self-evaluation should be performed on a regular basis.

6.4 Feedback-loops

Feedback between all stakeholders is a prerequisite in order to create motivation for cooperation, creating advantageous relations and for all kinds of learning-processes. This is why more attention should be focused on feedback and feedback-loops (figure 11). Keeping up a two-way communication with the most important stakeholders regarding individual sub-dimensions, as well as taking the comprehensive picture into account, will improve the education program.
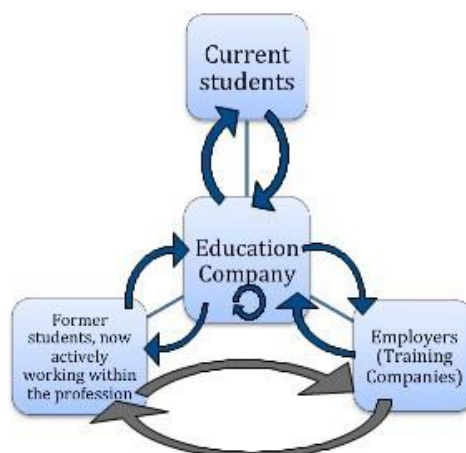
Figure 11. Feedback-loops and paths for evaluation. Blue arrows illustrate loops and paths that should be handled by the education company. Grey arrows illustrate the paths that should be handled by the training companies.

Loop 1: Employees (education company) «» Current students. Employees perform regular evaluations with current students. Current students receive feedback on evaluations.

Loop 2: Employers (training companies) «» Former students now working as PT:s. The training company collect information about the qualities of their PT. Feedback is given to the PT in order to motivate him or her as well as to enable improvements in areas of weakness and to encourage and keep up areas of strength.

Loop 3: Employees (education company) «» Employers (training companies). Employees at the education company perform evaluation of their former students in cooperation with one or several training companies. If the training companies performed Loop 2 the results will constitute relevant material used in Loop 3. Otherwise their general thoughts will constitute the evaluation material. Feedback will then be sent back to the training company including a presentation of planned quality improvements. At the next occasion for evaluation these improvements can be evaluated. Design of examinations and quality assessment should also be discussed in this loop since the employers possesses relevant knowledge about the profession.

Loop 4: Employees (education company) «» Former students now working as PT:s. This loop allows access to more information about the contents and structure of the education program. Moreover, these PT:s will be able to contribute with views regarding the outcome quality. The collected material should be compiled and the result should be used for improving quality as well as for giving feedback to the ones that participated during the evaluation-process.

Loop 5: This loop is all about internal evaluation and self-assessment. It includes critical assessment of the company and its employees' own work and how this can be improved.

6.5 Visualization of the proposed model and approach

In figure 12, the proposed quality dimensions and the core of the model are presented. The core of this model consists of the customer focused VOC technique, the systems based approach and the definition of quality. Involving important stakeholders is a prerequisite to be able to perform a comprehensive and relevant evaluation-process. Furthermore, in this approach feedback is of great importance and therefore also included in the core. Outside the core the different quality dimensions can be found. In this case there are five different dimensions, which have been developed and adapted based on how the stakeholders define quality in relation to the specific service. The included dimensions focuses on five different aspects of the education program and each of them should initially be evaluated separately. Still, as figure 12 shows, they are interrelated and should therefore also be treated as a totality.

OQ: Outcome Quality

ETIQ: Employee Teacher Interaction Quality

SCQ: Structure and Contents Quality

PEQ: Physical Environment Quality

EAIQ: Employee Administration Interaction Quality

VOC: Voice Of the Customer
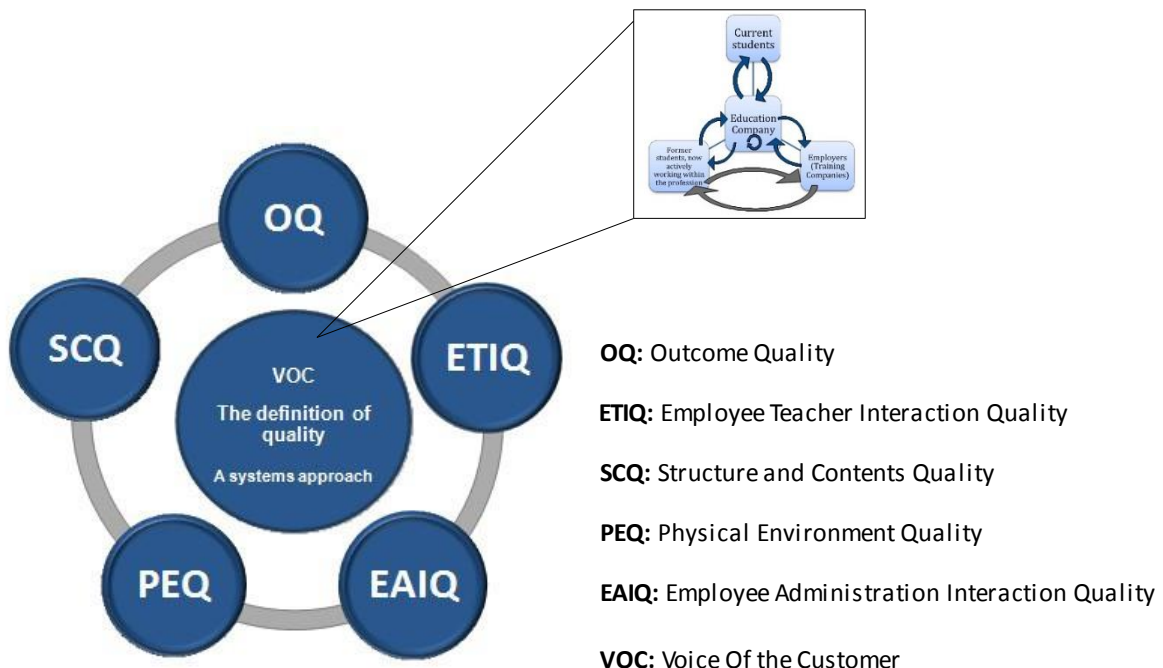
Figure 12. The quality dimensions and core of the proposed model

Figure 13 illustrates the sub-dimensions of the five quality dimensions previously presented. The circle specifies which quality dimension the sub-dimensions belong to. Each sub-dimension should be evaluated separately but also as a part of a comprehensive picture. Below, Outcome Quality is placed in the center since this dimension is perceived to be the most important one by the students; still it is important to remember that this dimension is totally dependent on the other dimensions and sub-dimensions. The number of sub-dimensions is here different for each dimension. This is due to a non-existing rule about how many dimensions that should be included. The number of sub-dimensions that should be included depends all in all on which ones that are most important to the specific stakeholders, how much effort evaluation of each

sub-dimension demands and how much time and resources that is available for performing the evaluation. The sub-dimensions presented below are the ones most frequently mentioned by students, employers and employees. Due to this they are proposed to constitute the largest contribution when looking at the comprehensive picture.

Structure and Contents Quality

- LOGICAL AND WELL-REASONED
- DISTRIBUTION OF THEORY AND PRACTISE
- PRACTISE WITH EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS
- A PURPOSE OF OPTIMAL LEARNING

SCQ

Employee Teacher Interaction Quality

- KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- PERSONALIZED ATTENTION

ETIQ

Outcome Quality

- KNOWLEDGE
- SECURITY AND CONFIDENCE
- ABILITY TO MEET MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF CLIENTS
- EMPLOYABILITY
- QUALITY ASSURANCE

OQ

Physical Environment Quality

PEQ

- FRESH AIR/GOOD VENTILATION
- FRESH AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT
- FACILITIES WITH APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENT OF GOOD QUALITY
- ATMOSPHERE THAT PROMOTES LEARNING
- INSPIRING CLASSMATES

EAIQ

Employee Admin. Interaction Quality

- QUICK THROWBACK
- ORGANIZED AND PUNCTUAL
- EASILY ACCESSIBLE
- KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS
- WELCOMING

Figure 13. The quality sub-dimensions included in the proposed model

In figure 14 figures 11-13 have been put together and they are here presented as the total major part of the proposed model. The important stakeholders (systems approach) are placed in the core together with the definition of quality and important paths for evaluation and feedback. Dimensions and sub-dimensions of quality are placed separately around the core, still being interrelated and more or less dependent on one another. VOC is the major technique used for performing the evaluation.
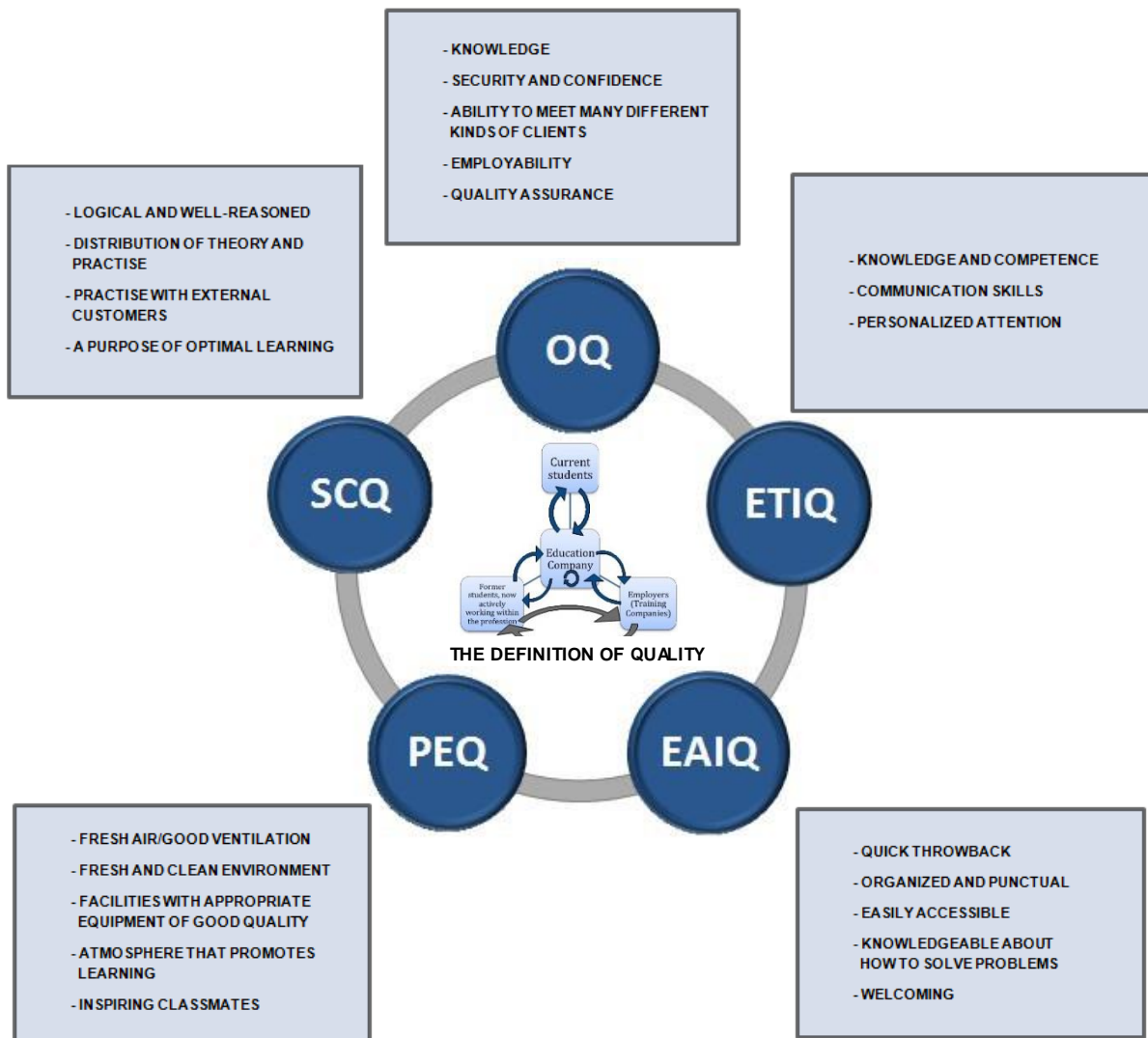
Figure 14. An overview of the whole proposed model (for abbreviations see the previous page).

It is important to develop a strategy about *when* and *how* to perform evaluations. This study proposes continuous evaluations, both since it is preferred by the students (section 5.1.2) but also since it is supported in existing literature (section 3.3.3). Students also seem to prefer individual evaluations during class hours. Regarding the employers and working PT:s these evaluations should be designed and performed depending on references from each individual training company or PT.

In figure 15 the second part of the proposed model is presented. This is the complementing evaluation made based on the performance-to-expectations gap.
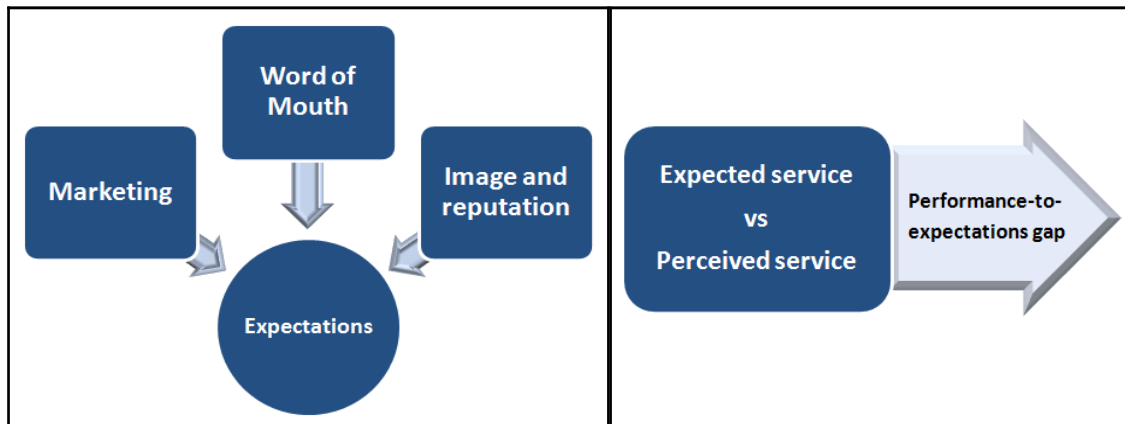

Figure 15. Expectations and performance-to-expectations gap

Each stakeholder has his or her expectations of a service. These expectations are often formed based on what has been seen or heard in relation to the specific service (marketing, WoM, company image and reputation). However, all of these expectations can be seen as input that customers or stakeholders take with them and use as a reference when evaluating parts of the service. Awareness about what these expectations are is fundamental for the company since e.g. marketing should be attractive but realistic, not raising unreachable expectations. This is a way for the company to keep track of its marketing and what is communicated from the company itself and its former customers. Thus, the evaluation should be initiated by asking the new students to document the expectations they have on the education program. All documents are then to be collected and stored. In the end of the education period or at a later occasion these documents can be handed back and the student can then evaluate if the education program fulfilled these expectations. For this evaluation e.g. a five point scale and completing comments could be used.

There are probably as many different definitions of quality as there are people. By developing the company's own definition of quality, taking off in own views but including the students' and potential employers' definition of quality it will be possible to have a strong common definition within the company. Furthermore, this will result in important awareness about demands and expectations that the company and its students should be able to meet. Despite the probably endless number of definitions of quality, still some dimensions and sub-dimensions seem to be more important than others. By including these dimensions in the model the most important aspects can be evaluated and improved. When comparing the documented prior expectations (input) with the perceived service a performance-to-expectations gap (areas of improvement) can be revealed (output). Expectations have to be free, not linked to dimensions or sub-dimensions of quality, since these also will be used to evaluate the company marketing efforts, Word of Mouth and image and reputation. The dimensions and sub-dimensions of quality as well as the performance-to-expectations gap will be of great help in finding areas of improvement and thereby improving the service quality (Figure 16). In turn, improving service quality will result in satisfied customers talking positively about the education program, thus creating positive WoM.
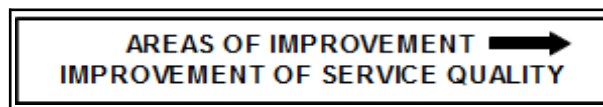
Figure 16. Areas of improvement can be identified and the service quality can thereby be increased

The model and approach, if properly used, will help ensure quality within private education based on a more comprehensive view. Furthermore, several stakeholders have been taken into account and thereby performed improvements will meet the expectations of the complete chain of important stakeholders. Moreover, the company will have a structured, effective and strategic way of evaluating their business. The employees will also have a common language and framework, which will contribute to a higher level of consistency and common understanding than work performed using previous models.

For companies in private education the developed model, with its dimensions and sub-dimensions, could be used directly, since this model is adapted to this industry. The line of action and approach could also be used to develop a similar model, specific for the own company.

7. Analytic discussion

In this section an analytic discussion concerning the findings from this study will be performed in relation to the theoretical framework.

7.1 Empirical findings

Below, the findings from this study will be further analyzed and discussed in relation to the theoretical framework.

7.1.1 Theoretical and practical understanding

To be able to perform a relevant evaluation that results in material that can constitute a successful foundation for improvements of service quality, you first have to understand the complexity of doing this. This understanding is based on knowledge about the many dimensions that are inherent in the concept of quality, as well as the knowledge that quality implies different dimensions depending on the business or industry being subject to evaluation. Furthermore, quality can include different dimensions depending on the stakeholder group or even the individual stakeholder in focus. This is why it is important to find out how the different stakeholders define quality and the base the evaluation on this. Also, to meet different expectations you have to know which these expectations might be, as well as understand the implications of them. These views somehow have to correspond to each other, since the gap between expected and perceived service quality will determine the total quality experience. The student expects something from the education program and the potential employer expect something from the PT and thereby also from the education company. Students are customers, but they are also their own product and the supplier of a service. By creating a model adapted for evaluation of a certain service and then perform regular evaluations the company can develop their own measures. This kind of systematic approach for evaluation of quality will lead to far better results than using an unsystematic approach. Furthermore, if a company allows its business and systems to become static over time it probably will fail in keeping up with changes and development which are important for achieving competitive advantage.

Regarding the practical execution and application of this systematic approach and model, it is crucial to understand the theoretical foundation but also to have a clear line of action for using this information. It is a matter of understanding both theory and practice and also which person that is the proper one for performing certain parts of the process. The model and approach of the proposed model is not to be used by individual employees within a company in order to improve service quality. Instead it implies an approach that should permeate the entire company. It will be of great importance to plan and prepare the evaluation process thoroughly

and formulate the purpose and goals. After a proper preparatory work each part of the evaluation should be performed in an accurate way by a suitable employee, to later on be compiled and analyzed as a totality. The definitions of the different concepts are to be expressed and used in the same way by every employee within the company. This will lead to less of a hassle because of misunderstandings due to a non-uniform framework for performing the evaluation and the following analysis. Moreover, it is a prerequisite to deliver feedback to all participating stakeholders. In that way all of them will be able to know that their information is taken care of and used for executing necessary improvements. Most important is to make sure that the material collected during an evaluation process are analyzed and used for the initial purpose and not left unanalyzed in a pile of paper or forgotten computer file. This would be a waste of valuable information, since evaluations are to be performed continuously with up-to-date material.

7.1.2 The execution of improvements: Stakeholder perspectives

From a student's perspective the quality of the education program directly affects their own qualities as PT:s. The extent of the impact differs, depending on the students' background and prior knowledge. However, it is in all students' best interest that the education program contributes with fundamental, up-to-date knowledge and educates them in the best possible way during the education period, as well as prepares them for the actual profession and future demands. This stakeholder wants quality in exchange for the money he or she paid to attend the education program and to be able to use the outcome for the wished purpose.

From an employer perspective the demand for certain qualities are high since the client base of today are very diverse and the training companies want to be able to offer successful service. Areas of improvement have been identified and in some cases overcome by offering an introductory course both in routines specific for the actual training company, but also to cover up for areas not adequately taught within existing education programs. It is in the employer's interest to instead include such areas in the education program, as well as cooperate with the education company to be able to deliver important feedback and perform necessary quality improvements. This stakeholder wants well-educated, competent and motivated PT:s.

From an education company perspective regular evaluations and improvements are a prerequisite for a company established on a market like the investigated one, in order to stay up to date. Trends come and go and the demands from the market are rapidly changing and more diverse than ever before. Regarding this kind of service the conflict between making

money and educating the best personal trainers is present. Improvements may reduce cost or result in the earning of more money, still they can also imply increased costs or loss of money and reputation (due to trial and error concerning new trends and implementation of these in the contents and structure of the education program). This type of business is profit-driven and thus has an interest in designing the education program for this purpose as well as offering the best education program available. When improvements and changes are implemented it is also important to be right in time compared to both the community and the competing companies. The community has to be ready for the change and perceive it as positive and advantageous in relation to other available alternatives. Furthermore, if you are too late compared with competing companies it may be too late to use the change as an advantage in the way you could have, thereby missing out on customers. The studied education program is not very differentiated from other companies' on the market, which makes the price for attending the education program one of the main reasons for choosing it. The question is: What should be the main reason for a potential customer to choose this company? Of course the goal is to educate the best personal trainers and differentiate due to that, since this indirectly leads to advantages, still this is a trade-off against uncertainty and profit.

7.1.3 The proposed model: Advantages compared to existing models

When applying the proposed model it is important to distinguishing each dimension and sub-dimension from one another and to evaluate these separately. Following this the dimensions should be analyzed as a totality to obtain the comprehensive picture and gain awareness of the relations between them. The reason for evaluating each dimension separately is because the company may be performing well in one area but not in another. By using distinct measures, an education company can identify the most critical improvements to be made and resources can be allocated more efficiently to these areas.

Since stakeholders define quality partly from different views it is more difficult to develop one single model suitable for all stakeholders. Involving depth in time overcomes part of the problem since the importance of the different stakeholders views vary during the education process and depending on which quality dimension that is in focus. Still, with this in mind, a common model could be developed. Since this is the first model of its kind it is hard to completely determine its success. However, improvements suggested in earlier research have been taken into consideration, which indicate that the proposed model most probably will offer a more comprehensive one. This model is based on findings where interests from several stakeholders have been taken into account and thereby executed improvements will meet the

expectations and needs of "the whole chain" of important stakeholders. The involvement of these stakeholders will also be increased by the constant loop of feedback and thus creation of strong relations. A structured approach including performance of shorter, regular evaluations during the education program also corresponds to earlier presented research performed by Arvidsson (2007). As Motwani and Kumar stated in the year of 1997 this method also makes it possible to compare results with available internal measures. Thus, this method makes it possible to develop the company's own quality measures.

Different from other models is also the rank of the different dimensions of quality. Student rank Outcome Quality as the most important dimension, followed by the Employee Teacher Interaction Quality. The SERVQUAL-model was criticized due to focusing on the functional part of quality and thus having less focus on the outcome of the service. In the proposed model the different dimensions were ranked to promote the students views in order to build upon this. Still the Outcome Quality is dependent on the other dimensions. This is why all dimensions should be treated as a totality. The areas that should be given more attention are the ones that need the most improvement due to performed evaluation. Still the rank can help when prioritizing how resources should be directed.

By using the proposed model and approach the company will have an adapted, effective and structured strategy for evaluating their business. By defining quality and reveal expectations the education program will be able to live up to current expectations as well as improving the education program both for current and future students. The proposed model, with its dimensions and sub-dimensions, could be used directly by companies within private education if wished, since this model is adapted to this kind of companies. Otherwise, the approach can be used to develop a similar model, specific for the own company.

7.1.4 Important insights

According to Sousa and Voss (2002) the complex nature of the quality concept, has made it difficult for researchers to establish one single definition of product or service quality. After performing the research for my thesis, a search for one single definition for the concept of quality is proposed to somewhat be a journey with no end. Each service or product has its own qualities and as Cheng stated in 2003, its meaning is a matter of personal judgment. My research made me realize that it is even difficult to define quality in relation to one single product or service in a way that satisfies all customers and stakeholders. Moreover, the environment in which the companies operate is more changing than ever and the importance of each quality dimension varies across industries as well as with the individual service. In order to perform a valid evaluation of your business, product or service, you will probably be most

successful when you design this process especially for your own company and its purpose. Companies within the same industry will be able to use a common framework; still minor adjustments may have to be made in order to further adapt the applied model. It is also important to realize that in the same way as finding one single definition of service quality are proposed to be a journey with no end, the work to improve quality is a continuous process that needs constant attention.

8. Conclusion

The purpose of this Master's thesis was to develop a comprehensive model and approach for evaluation and improvement of service quality in order for a private education company to improve its education program and thereby stay competitive in a rapidly changing market climate.

The performed research had its foundation in existing models within the area of evaluation of service quality as well as research concerning the concept of quality and quality improvements. To be able to perform further research it was important to define the major customer or stakeholder groups which have the largest impact on the service quality. Then, by using VOC and a system based approach, data could be collected and used for the development and design of the proposed model and approach. One of the greatest contributions made by using this technique and approach was that it made it possible to find out how different stakeholders define quality in education. Defining the concept of quality is a prerequisite for being able to understand the stakeholders' information as completely as possible. This understanding constitutes the foundation of the different dimensions and sub-dimensions included in the model. Without these dimensions and sub-dimensions the performance of a relevant evaluation would not be possible since these systematize the evaluation and enables the development of measures. According to the performed research the following five dimensions are the most important ones to include when evaluating an education program within private education:

- **Outcome Quality**
- **Employee Teacher Interaction Quality**
- **Structure and Contents Quality**
- **Physical Environment Quality**
- **Employee Administration Interaction Quality**

Furthermore, defining quality is also fundamental for a common language and efficiency within the own company. By developing a model of this kind, taking the shortcomings within existing models into consideration, important contributions to the established knowledge within the area of evaluation and quality improvements could be done.

Stakeholders or customers will also be able to answer when and how they prefer to deliver information. By addressing "with whom?", "when?" and "how?" a large body of relevant data can be collected. Fundamental is also the feedback-loops, which enables a complete communication between the education company and other customers or stakeholders which are in possession of valuable information. Being first in line with a model and approach of this kind may result in a competitive advantage compared to competing companies, if relations are handled in the right way. To explicitly have such a strategy and arrangement for an education program is believed to attract potential customers and differentiate the company from other similar ones.

The findings of this thesis have elucidated earlier not included dimensions when performing evaluations and improvements of service quality in relation to private education. These findings are proposed to constitute a more comprehensive way of evaluating service quality and a promising foundation for further studies. The issues addressed in this Master's thesis are of importance to Service Quality Managers as well as researchers in the area of service quality. Service Quality Managers in the sector of private education can use the developed model as a tool for evaluation of current work and thereby enforce important quality improvements. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance for managers to understand how customers define quality, what service quality exists of and how to evaluate it (Asubonteng et al., 1996).

Due to the complex nature of the quality concept and the environment in which the companies operate it is proposed that each company should design its evaluation process based on the own company and its purpose. A common framework is an alternative for companies within the same industry. Most important to remember is that the work to improve quality is a continuous process that needs constant attention. This work is crucial for the survival and success of the company, thus it is a journey that ends only if the company does the same.

9. Further research

This study was limited to studying one single company within the industry. Further research including an increased number of private education companies would make it possible to validate the findings of this study and to evaluate the credibility of the proposed model. Moreover, the approach and model developed in this study can also be used as a foundation for studies within other service settings for development of similar and for these settings more appropriate models. Moreover, the proposed model could be further evaluated and improved by including additional stakeholders, foremost clients in the gym.

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PT2, former student, interviewed 2013-05-28 duration 35 minutes

PT3, former student, interviewed 2013-05-28 duration 34 minutes

PT4, former student, interviewed 2013-05-30 duration 39 minutes

PT5, former student, interviewed 2013-05-31 duration 35 minutes

PT6, former student, interviewed 2013-06-02 duration 45 minutes

PT7, former student, interviewed 2013-06-03 duration 35 minutes

PT8, former student, interviewed 2013-06-03 duration 41 minutes

PT9, former student, interviewed 2013-06-05 duration 42 minutes

PT10, former student, interviewed 2013-06-05 duration 20 minutes

PT11, former student, interviewed 2013-06-10 duration 34 minutes

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 - Intervjufrågor PT-intervjuerna
(Tid för intervjun ca 30-40 min)

- Presentation av mig själv och mitt exjobb -

Generella frågor angående dagssituation/resultat

1. Du gick alltså Safes PT-utbildning under år 2012. Du kan väl berätta lite vad du gör idag? Jobbar du som PT eller har du fortsatt på ett annat spår?

2PT. Är du egen företagare eller anställd?

Anställd	Egen företagare
Fick du jobb som PT direkt eller hur lång tid tog det?Hade du kontakter eller tidigare jobb i branschen?	Hade du bestämt dig för att öppna eget redan innan du började utbildningen?
Hur mycket jobbar du (heltidsanställd, deltidsanställd, extraanställd)?	Kände du att utbildningen förberedde dig och gav dig en god grund för att starta eget?
Hur många kunder har du per vecka in genomsnitt?	Hur många kunder har du per vecka in genomsnitt?
Tycker du att lönen är okej? Om du vill svara: Vad tjänar du? Har du bonus?	

2ANNAT. Söker du PT jobb eller har du helt enkelt valt bort PT-yrket för att jobba med något annat?
Om personen valt annat yrke: Av vilken anledning har du valt bort PT-yrket?
Om personen söker jobb: Upplever du det svårt att få jobb? Diskutera vidare runt detta.

Marknadsföring och val av utbildning

3. Kommer du ihåg hur du först kom i kontakt med Safes utbildning till personlig tränare?

4. Vad var det som fick dig att välja Safes utbildning och inte någon annan liknande utbildning?

5. Vilka liknande skolor har du hört talas om? Har du studerat hos någon av dessa?
Hur upplevdes detta i så fall i jämförelse med Safe?

Kvalitet och förväntningar, utbildningsprocessen, lärarna och examinationerna

6. Hur upplevde du att det administrativa runt utbildningen fungerade? Flöt allt på smidigt

och utan problem både innan, under och efter utbildningen (eller uppstod någon form av frågetecken runt t.ex. din ansökan, övrig information, betalning, PT-licens eller liknande)?

7. Hur upplevde du din utbildning som helhet? Vägde den upp dina förväntningar och hur var det upplevda värdet relativt kostnaden för utbildningen?

8. Var det någon del som var särskilt svår/hade mindre bra upplägg? Motsvarande: Riktigt bra upplägg? Hur var fördelningen mellan teori och praktik? Var målen för olika delarna tydliga?

9. Berätta lite om hur undervisningen gick till och hur du upplevde undervisningssättet och de lärare du hade?

10. Vad tycker du om de examinationsformer som Safe använder sig av i sin PT-utbildning? Var de genomtänkta, relevanta och viktiga för din utveckling och din trygghet som nyutbildad PT?
    - PT-praktik?   - Praktiska prov?   - Teoretiska prov?

Utbildningens resultat, styrkor och svagheter

11. Hur upplever du att arbetsgivare värderar din utbildning? Är en utbildning från Safe något som arbetsgivarna känner igen?

12. Har du sökt jobb utomlands? *Om ja: Hur står sig utbildningen där?*

13. Är det något du tycker saknas i utbildningen som du efteråt märker att du hade behövt ha med dig ut i arbetslivet?

14. Vilka är utbildningens styrkor? Finns det något som du har extra mycket användning och nytta av i ditt dagliga arbete?

15. Vilken tycker du/tror du är den största utmaningen med att vara PT?

Nöjd-kund-parametrar

16. **Hur nöjd är du med:**
    a. Innehållet i Safes PT-utbildning: inte nöjd alls, något nöjd, nöjd, mycket nöjd, över förväntan
    b. Safes anställdas bemötande av dig som elev/kund: inte nöjd alls, något nöjd, nöjd, mycket nöjd, över förväntan

17. Skulle du välja/har du redan valt Safe igen för vidare utbildning?

18. Skulle du kunna tänka dig att, eller har du redan, rekommenderat Safe till någon annan person?

Förbättringsförslag (sammanfattningsvis)

19. Har du några förslag på förbättringar till Safe, vad gäller deras sätt att bemöta dig som kund m.m.?

- Fråga om det är okej om jag återkommer med ytterligare frågor om de skulle dyka upp -

- Tacka för att personen tog sig tid att delta i min intervju -

Appendix 2 – Intervjufrågor Utbildningsansvarig för PT-utbildningen
(Tid för intervjun: ca 40-45 min)

Den här intervjun var till för att utöka min kunskap angående marknadsföringen och utbildningen i helhet. Den genomfördes i början av exjobbsperioden, innan jag visste särskilt mycket om utbildningen. Av den anledningen hade jag inte gjort någon utförligare struktur för intervjun. Planen var att ha några baspunkter att utgå ifrån för att sedan prata relativt fritt utifrån det som dök upp (inom relevanta ramar).

- Inledningsvis presenteras intervjusyftet m.m. -

1.   Via vilka kanaler marknadsför ni er utbildning?

2.   Vilken tror du är den största kanalen vad gäller marknadsföring, den ni syns mest via? Den ni får in flest anmälningar ifrån.

3.   När ni fått in en anmälan, ni har tagit kontakt och det börjar bli dags för eleverna att börja sin utbildning. Hur ser rutinerna ut från och med detta?

4.   Hur lång är utbildningen och hur ser upplägget ut? *Bred fråga där många följdfrågor kan komma att dyka upp: - Examinationer   - Praktik/TeoriPedagogik/Undervisning*

5.   Vilken typ av kurslitteratur använder ni er av? Hur ofta uppdaterar ni detta och på vilket sätt?

6.   Hur skulle du säga att er PT-utbildning skiljer sig från övriga utbildares utbildningar? Vilka är era styrkor?

- Fråga om det är okej om jag återkommer med ytterligare frågor om de skulle dyka upp -

- Tacka för att utbildningsansvarig tog sig tid att delta i min intervju -

Appendix 3 - Intervjufrågor Kvalitetsansvarig för PT-utbildningen
(Tid för intervjun: ca 1 timme)

1. Berätta om Safes vision och mål. Hur kom ni fram till dessa och hur jobbar med dem?

2. Berätta hur ni tänker runt kvalitetssäkringen av Safes PT-utbildning? Varför ska de som vill bli PT välja just er utbildning ur ett kvalitetsperspektiv?

3. Vilken kundgrupp riktar ni er egentligen främst emot? Hur gör gör ni för att nå dessa?

4. Idag betalar individen en summa pengar för att gå er utbildning. Det är egentligen det enda kravet. Ni har inte funderat på att även jobba med någon annan form av intag?

5. Har det hänt att ni fått stoppa/underkänna någon elev helt under utbildningens gång? Alltså att denna inte nått de krav som ni ställer?

6. Varför har ni valt de typer av upplägg som ni har valt? Längden på utbildningen och det innehåll som finns med? Vem avgör vad innehållet i utbildningen ska vara?

7. Hur tror du responsen skulle vara om ni t.ex. la till ytterligare två veckor till utbildningen och om ni spred ut den över längre tid (med fler lediga dagar)?

8. Om vi då går över till själva utformningen av utbildningen och de personer som jobbar runt denna. Vilka anser du vara era största styrkor? Brister?

9. Hur ser du på upplägget med en dags praktik med externa kunder? Möjlig att utöka?

10. Jag vet också att ni går igenom "arbetslivet" och PT som yrke. Vad innehåller dessa delar och på vilket sätt förbereder det studenterna för det kommande arbetet?

11. Hur tänker ni runt utformningen av examinationerna och valet av examinationsformer?

12. Hur ofta uppdaterar ni kurslitteraturen?

13. Ni har ju många kunniga och duktiga lärare har jag förstått. Vem får jobba hos er?

14. Berätta lite om samarbetet med SATS. Hur stäms utbildningens innehåll av med t.ex. den tredagarsutbildning som studenterna sedan går om de väljer att börja på just SATS.

15. Vilken är den största utmaningen för er som jobbar med utformning av och kvalitetsaspekter hos själva utbildningen?

16. Utvecklingen av PT-rollen och därmed också utbildningen?

17. Hur ser era rutiner för utvärdering och kvalitetsförbättring ut? Följer ni någon särskild modell?

18. Gör eleverna någon form av utvärdering efter genomförd utbildning?

19. Hur definierar du begreppet kvalitet när det gäller utbildning?

20. Hur definierar du begreppet kvalitet när det gäller en personlig tränare?

- Fråga om det är okej om jag återkommer med ytterligare frågor om de skulle dyka upp -
- Tacka för att kvalitetsansvarig tog sig tid att delta i min intervju -

Appendix 4 - Intervjufrågor Rekryterare

(Tid för intervjun: ca 30-35 min)

- Presentation av mig själv och mitt exjobb -

Generella frågor

1. Berätta lite kort vem du är och vilken roll du har på (företag).

2. Vad innebär konceptet kvalitet för dig? Finns det olika typer av kvaliteter?

3. Vad är kvalitet hos en personlig tränare för dig? Finns det olika typer av kvaliteter?

4. Vilka kvaliteter söker ni hos de personliga tränare ni anställer? Vilken skulle du säga är den absolut viktigaste kvaliteten en personlig tränare kan ha?

5. Vilka brister kan du/ni se hos personliga tränare idag? Något specifikt med de från Safe?

6. Vilka ytterligare krav tror du kommer finnas på de utbildade personliga tränarna i framtiden och därmed den utbildning de går för att få yrkeskompetensen?

7. Har något utbildningsföretag kontaktat er för att be er delta i någon form av utvärdering och avstämning av deras utbildning?

Mer specifikt om just Safe

8. Vad är din bild av Safe och deras utbildning till personlig tränare?

9. Vad förväntar ni er av en Safe-utbildad personlig tränare?

10. Hur står sig en Safe-utbildning hos er jämfört med andra utbildningar på marknaden?

11. Har du upplevt någon skillnad på de Safe-utbildade som ni anställt jämfört med utbildade från andra företag?

12. Vad tror du att det skulle behövas mer av i de utbildningar som finns idag? Finns det någon annan aspekt hos utbildningarna som skulle behöva förändras och varför?

Vidare

13. Har ni någon egen form av utbildning som de ni anställer går igenom innan de börjar arbeta? Någon särskild anledning till detta?

14. Har ni någon utvärdering med era kunder för att ta reda på vad de anser om era personliga tränare? Hur tilldelas en personlig tränare?

15. Något annat du skulle vilja framföra till de utbildande företagen angående det vi pratat om eller några egna tankar?

- Fråga om det är okej om jag återkommer med ytterligare frågor om de skulle dyka upp -
- Tacka för att personen tog sig tid att delta i min intervju

Appendix 5 – Frågorna från den genomförda SurveyMonkey enkäten

Generella frågor

Vi inleder med några korta frågor om dig och hur du i dagsläget använder din PT-utbildning.

1. Du är

○ Kvinna

○ Man

2. Vilket år föddes du?

3. Vilka av följande alternativ passar in på dig?

☐ Jag har licens som personlig tränare   ☐ Jag arbetar inte som personlig tränare

☐ Jag jobbar heltid som personlig tränare   ☐ Jag söker jobb som personlig tränare

☐ Jag jobbar deltid som personlig tränare   ☐ Jag avser inte jobba som personlig tränare

☐ Jag är anställd personlig tränare   ☐ Jag avser inte jobba som personlig tränare, men jag använder den kunskap och kompetens jag fick under PT-utbildningen som ett komplement i mitt nuvarande yrke

☐ Jag driver eget företag som personlig tränare

Annat:

Frågorna på den här sidan svarar du bara på om du jobbar som PT. Jobbar du med något annat kan du hoppa vidare direkt till fråga 9.

4. Om du jobbar som PT (anställd/egen företagare): Hur länge har du jobbat som PT?

Antal månader:

5. Om du jobbar som PT (anställd/egen företagare): Hur många timmar i veckan jobbar du och hur många timmar av dessa är PT-timmar då du jobbar med klient?

Arbetstimmar:

varav PT-timmar med klient:

6. Om du jobbar som PT (anställd/egen företagare): Ungefär hur stor är din inkomst före skatt (från PT-jobbet) en genomsnittlig månad?

Inkomst före skatt (kr):

7. Om du jobbar som anställd PT (är du egen företagare hoppar du över denna fråga): Hur lång tid tog det för dig att få jobb som PT från det att du börjat söka?

○ Mindre än 1 månad

○ Mer än 1 månad, men mindre än 2 månader

○ Mer än 2 månader, men mindre än 4 månader

○ Mer än 4 månader, men mindre än 6 månader

○ Mer än 6 månader, men mindre än 8 månader

○ Mer än 8 månader, men mindre än 10 månader

○ Mer än 10 månader, men mindre än 12 månader

○ 12 månader eller längre

8. Om du jobbar som anställd PT (är du egen företagare hoppar du över den här frågan): Har din arbetsgivare på något sätt (endera direkt eller via dina klienter) utvärderat ditt arbete och gett dig feedback utifrån detta?

○ Ja, mitt arbete har utvärderats, men jag har inte fått någon feedback

○ Ja, mitt arbete har utvärderats och jag har fått feedback

○ Nej, mitt arbete har inte utvärderats

○ Nej, mitt arbete har inte utvärderats. Det skulle dock vara värdefullt för mig att få feedback från arbetsgivare och klienter

Kommentarer:

Informationskanaler och förväntningar

På den här sidan syftar frågorna till att lyfta fram de förväntningar du hade på PT-utbildningen, samt hur väl dessa förväntningar sedan tillgodoseddes under och efter utbildningen. Vidare är det också intressant för mig att veta vilka styrkor och svagheter du upplevde hos utbildningen.

9. Genom vilken/vilka kanal(er) fick du information om utbildningen?

- ☐ Safes hemsida
- ☐ Jag kontaktade Safe och pratade med en av de anställda
- ☐ Person från Safe som fanns ute på ett SATS-center
- ☐ Safes katalog som fanns ute på ett SATS-center
- ☐ Annons i en tidning
- ☐ Kompis eller annan person som hört talas om utbildningen
- ☐ Kompis eller annan person som gått utbildningen eller någon annan utbildning hos Safe

Annat:

10. Vilka förväntningar hade du på utbildningen innan du började studera?

11. Utbildningen motsvarade de förväntningar jag hade på den innan jag började.

- ○ Instämmer inte alls
- ○ Instämmer i viss mån
- ○ Instämmer i stort sett helt
- ○ Instämmer helt
- ○ Utbildningen överträffade mina förväntningar

Vilka förväntningar (om några) levde den inte upp till:

12. Beskriv kortfattat vilka styrkor respektive svagheter du anser att utbildningen har vad gäller upplägg,
innehåll, lärare, administrativ personal, lokaler, koppling till arbetslivet, examinationer m.m.
Brainstorma fritt!

Sätt + framför styrkorna och - framför svagheterna.

Kvalitet

Frågorna nedan handlar om din upplevelse av PT-utbildningen och vad du tycker är viktig hos en utbildning. Tänk både på bredden och på djupet och framför allt utifrån dina egna preferenser.

13. Vad är god kvalitet för dig när det gäller utbildning generellt? Reflektera gärna utifrån flera perspektiv,
både utbildningen som helhet och de faktorer som ingår i och runt denna.

[ ]

14. Rangordna följande kategorier utifrån hur stor betydelse du anser att de har för din upplevda kvalitet hos en utbildning. 1 = störst betydelse, 5 = minst betydelse

[▼]	Den miljö i vilken studierna bedrivs
[▼]	Interaktionen med lärare
[▼]	Interaktionen med administrativ personal
[▼]	Upplägget/strukturen hos utbildningen
[▼]	Det resultat som uppnås efter utbildningen (det du fått med dig och allt detta innebär)

15. Anser du att någon kategori saknas i den föregående frågan (fråga 13), i så fall vilken?
Skriv ner denna (alt. dessa om du kommer på fler än en) och ge en kortfattad beskrivning.

[ ]

16. Vad är värdefullt samt innebär god kvalitet för dig när det gäller kategorierna nedan?
Lista och förklara kortfattat max 3 stycken underrubriker per kategori

Utbildningsmiljön	[ ]
Utbildningens resultat (det du får med dig och vad detta innebär)	[ ]
Interaktionen med lärare	[ ]
Interaktionen med administrativ personal	[ ]
Upplägget/strukturen hos utbildningen	[ ]

20. Utbildningen gjorde att jag känner mig trygg i min roll som PT.

○ Instämmer inte alls
○ Instämmer något
○ Instämmer delvis
○ Instämmer i stort sett helt
○ Instämmer helt

Kommentarer:

[ ]

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Utbildningen och utbildningsinnehållet

De här frågorna och påståendena handlar om utbildningens innehåll och faktorer kopplat till detta.

17. Anser du att du var insatt i vilka kunskaper du skulle behöva i en yrkesroll som PT redan innan du började studera på utbildningen?

○ Jag var inte insatt
○ Jag var något insatt
○ Jag var delvis insatt
○ Jag var relativt bra insatt
○ Jag var helt insatt

Kommentarer:

[text box]

18. Längden på utbildningen var lagom i förhållande till innehållet.

○ Instämmer inte alls
○ Instämmer något
○ Instämmer delvis
○ Instämmer i stort sett helt
○ Instämmer helt

Kommentarer:

21. De kunskaper jag fick med mig från utbildningen utgjorde en tillräcklig bas för ett kompetent yrkesutövande av rollen som PT.

○ Instämmer inte alls
○ Instämmer något
○ Instämmer delvis
○ Instämmer i stort sett helt
○ Instämmer helt

Kommentarer:

[text box]

22. Hur nöjd är du med innehållet i Safes PT-utbildning?

○ Inte nöjd alls
○ Något nöjd
○ Nöjd
○ Mycket nöjd
○ Över förväntan nöjd

Vilken/vilka aspekter rörande utbildningens innehåll (någon av de redan nämnda eller något du själv tänker på) är viktigast för dig?

[text box]

23. Beskriv kortfattat vad som var viktigast för dig att uppnå efter genomförd utbildning (målet och resultatet)?

[text box]

| A multi-dimensional model and approach for evaluation of service quality in private education

Lärarna, lokalerna m.m.

Lyft fram dina åsikter om lärare, lokaler m.m. genom frågorna nedan!

24. Bedöm hur mycket du instämmer med följande påståenden rörande lärare och administrativ personal:

	Instämmer inte alls	Instämmer något	Instämmer delvis	Instämmer i stort sett helt	Instämmer helt	Vet ej
Lärarna engagerade sig för att vi skulle kunna tillvarata utbildningsinnehållet på bästa sätt	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lärarna kunde förklara saker på ett sådant sätt att alla hade möjlighet att förstå	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lärarna hade en positiv attityd	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lärarna gjorde sitt ämne intressant	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lärarna var kunniga och kompetenta	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lärarna var enkla att nå om jag hade frågor	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lärarna gav oss regelbunden feedback	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lärarna var pålitliga	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lärarna som ledde undervisningen höll generellt sett en hög kvalitet	○	○	○	○	○	○
Den administrativa personalen var hjälpsam och tillmötesgående	○	○	○	○	○	○
Den administrativa personalen var kompetent	○	○	○	○	○	○
Den administrativa personalen var pålitlig	○	○	○	○	○	○

Vilken/vilka aspekter (av de ovan nämnda eller någon annan du tänker på) rörande lärarna är viktigast för dig?

25. Bedöm hur mycket du instämmer i följande påståenden rörande utbildningslokal och stämning:

	Instämmer inte alls	Instämmer något	Instämmer delvis	Instämmer i stort sett helt	Instämmer helt	Vet ej
Vi hade alltid tillgång till den utrustning vi behövde	○	○	○	○	○	○
Det rådde en positiv stämning under utbildningen	○	○	○	○	○	○
Det var bra luft i Safes utbildningslokal	○	○	○	○	○	○
Det var bra ljus i Safes utbildningslokal	○	○	○	○	○	○
Safes utbildningslokal var ren och fräsch	○	○	○	○	○	○
Safes utbildningslokal höll generellt sett en hög kvalitet	○	○	○	○	○	○

Vilken/vilka aspekter (av de ovan nämnda eller någon egen som du tänker på) rörande utbildningslokal och utbildningsmiljö är viktigast för dig?

Utvärdering

Här följer några frågor angående din uppfattning om hur en utbildning bör utvärderas.

26. Vilka av följande alternativ tror du skulle medföra att du själv skulle bidra med mest värdefull information till Safe vid en utvärdering?

○ Kortare regelbundna utvärderingar under utbildningens gång (på lektionstid)

○ Kortare regelbundna utvärderingar under utbildningens gång (utanför lektionstid)

○ En större utvärdering vid avslutningen av utbildningen (på lektionstid)

○ En större utvärdering vid avslutningen av utbildningen (utanför lektionstid)

27. Vilken av följande metoder för utvärdering föredrar du om du får välja? Ranka alternativen 1-6 med den du föredrar mest som nr 1 och den du föredrar minst som nr 6.

[▼]	Att få utvärderingsfrågor i början av utbildningen och sedan föra regelbunden dagbok utifrån dessa
[▼]	Muntlig individuell utvärdering med person från Safe
[▼]	Muntlig utvärdering i mindre grupp med någon från Safe som närvarar
[▼]	Muntlig utvärdering i grupp (enbart studenter) där det som tas upp dokumenteras och lämnas in till någon på Safe
[▼]	Skriftlig individuell utvärdering, enkätform på papper
[▼]	Skriftlig individuell utvärdering, enkätform datorbaserad

28. Fick ni feedback på er utvärdering eller information angående vad som kommit fram på tidigare studenters utvärdering?

○ Ja, feedback på egen utvärdering

○ Ja, information från tidigare studenters utvärdering

○ Ja, både och

○ Nej, inget av dem

Kommentarer:

[   ]

29. Har du samma uppfattning om Safes PT-utbildning idag som när du precis avslutat den?

○ Ja, precis samma

○ Nej, den har förändrats något (åt det positiva hållet)

○ Nej, den har förändrats något (åt det negativa hållet)

○ Nej, den har förändrats ganska mycket (åt det positiva hållet)

○ Nej, den har förändrats ganska mycket (åt det negativa hållet)

○ Nej, den har förändrats mycket (åt det positiva hållet)

○ Nej, den har förändrats mycket (åt det negativa hållet)

○ Har ej avslutat utbildningen

30. Har Safe kontaktat dig efter utbildningen för någon form av ytterligare utvärdering?

○ Ja

○ Nej

○ Nej, men jag skulle gärna svara på frågor om de hörde av sig

Avslutande kommentarer

Fem frågor sammanfattar och avslutar denna enkät!

31. Utbildningen var värd de pengar jag investerade för att kunna gå den.

○ Instämmer inte alls
○ Instämmer något
○ Instämmer delvis
○ Instämmer i stort sett helt
○ Instämmer helt

32. Hur nöjd är du med din utbildning hos Safe om du bedömer den ur ett helhetsperspektiv?

○ Inte nöjd alls
○ Något nöjd
○ Nöjd
○ Mycket nöjd
○ Över förväntan nöjd

I vilken stad studerade du?

[   ]

33. Skulle du rekommendera Safes PT-utbildning till en vän eller bekant som är intresserad av att gå en PT-utbildning?

○ Ja
○ Nej
○ Tveksam

Om nej eller tveksam: Av vilken anledning?

[   ]

34. För att sammanfatta denna enkät ber jag dig i en mening eller ett fåtal ord skriva ner det som är absolut viktigast för dig (alla kategorier) vad gäller en utbildning.

[   ]

35. Är det något ytterligare du skulle vilja tillägga angående den PT-utbildning du gick under år 2012?

[   ]

APPENDIX 6: Antal svarande per fråga

Från dessa siffror kan också ett visst bortfall finnas på grund av icke-relevanta svar. Dessa var dock sällsynta

1. 29,6%
2. 30,0%
3. 29,6%
4. 12,8%
5. 11,9%
6. 10,7%
7. 10,7%
8. 10,3%
9. 18,5%
10. 18,5%
11. 23,1%
12. 17,3%
13. 12,4%
14. 16,5%
15. 1,6%
16. 11,5%
17. 17,3%
18. 17,3%
19. 16,9%
20. 16,9%
21. 16,9%
22. 17,3%
23. 11,1%
24. 16,1%
25. 15,6%
26. 14,4%
27. 14,0%
28. 12,4%
29. 14,4%
30. 14,4%
31. 14,8%
32. 14,4%
33. 14,4%
34. 11,1%
35. 5,4%