

Drop-Out in Recreational & Fitness Sport

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The fitness line is characterized both by an almost stagnate numbers of fitness clubs and an annual variation of total membership numbers within the fitness studios. As a result many fitness clubs are constantly struggling with high customer fluctuation. High drop-out rates also have the effect that long-term financial as well as staff-wise arrangements are barely possible to make. Against this backdrop the question then arises: How is it that dropouts occur in fitness clubs at all? In order to answer this question we have to identify the different needs of the customers. In the evaluations and statistical analyses presented here, the focus is on how strong the various reasons are for quitting activities in a fitness studio. It is also studied to what extent these reasons differ from one another in terms of importance for the drop-out decision. We also examine whether there are typical priorities in the drop-out justification and which reasons are used, in a statistically significant way, more or less or not at all (Zarotis et al., 2017).

Methods: A total of 225 peoples, who had terminated their contract with a fitness studio, and where questioned. The survey was conducted as a actual decision through telephone inquiry. The gym had up to 1.151 memberships at the time of study. In that 59% of members are women and 41% of members are men. The gym faces strong competition. There are competitors who pursue a high price policy, one of which is a provider with a wellness area, but also providers with a low-price policy (Zarotis et al., 2017).

Results: The sample consists of almost 3/4 of female respondents and 1/4 of male respondents. The age range is between 16 and 74 years with a respondents' mean age of 43.5 years and a distribution of 13.0 years. In the age categories mentioned, most respondents (42.9%) are in age category 3 and a further 31.3% is in age category 2. Very young respondents represent only 9% of the respondents and respondents over 55 years 17% of the respondents. Contract terminations were made on average after 4.4 years of membership, with a very large distribution (standard deviation) of 3.8 (Zarotis et al., 2017).

Descriptive Statistics

Importance of quitting reasons in general

Table 1 shows the mean value, median and standard deviation of the questions concerning the quitting reasons.

	Mean value	Median	SD	Quantity
no fun anymore	1,3	1,0	9	224
too boring	1,2	1,0	7	225
others interests	1,3	1,0	9	223
offered too little health wise	1,1	1,0	4	222
problems with daily schedule	2,9	3,0	1,8	225

dissatisfied with customer composition in the studio	1,1	1,0	4	224
dissatisfied with instructor's supervision	1,1	1,0	4	224
crowded training space	1,4	1,0	9	225
lack of training progress	1,0	1,0	1	225
difficult access to the studio	1,2	1,0	7	225
dislike studio atmosphere	1,2	1,0	7	225
personal health does not allow further training	1,8	1,0	1,5	225
too lazy to continue the training	1,2	1,0	9	225
professional obligations	2,2	1,0	1,7	225
domestic / family obligations	2,0	1,0	1,6	225
membership costs too high	2,0	2,0	1,2	225
relocation	1,2	1,0	8	225
too little support from friends/ family	1,0	1,0	0	225
regular training timetable not compatible with my schedule	2,2	1,0	1,7	225

Table 1: Mean value, median and distribution of quitting reasons

Discussion: Most of the quitting reasons have a mean value of 1 or close to 1, which means that the majority of respondents have chosen the answer "does not apply at all". In one case, where the item "too little support from friends/family" was chosen, the respondents have chosen uniformly the first response category; there is no variance in the answers. The highest rating is clearly found at the quitting reason "Problems with daily schedule"; also, here the distribution is obviously the largest. This question therefore shows the greatest heterogeneity in the respondent group. The study of Brehm and Eberhardt (1995) shows similar results. Among 30 to 50 years its striking that stated "big time problems the respondent persons" as an obstacles to continue their participations in a

sports function. This age group was highly stressed for professional and familial reasons. In five other items, mean values are around 2 (mean values between 1.8 and 2.2). These are in descending order the reasons: "professional obligations", "regular training timetable not compatible with my schedule", "domestic / family obligations", "membership costs too high", and "personal health does not allow further training". The quitting reasons that were chosen by the respondents to be of considerable importance mainly refer to personal time management and thus relate to the prioritization of other sectors of life and other obligations. It is striking that, with the exception of the membership costs, all studio conditions do not play any role or at least a significant role in the quitting decision.

It also becomes evident that 19 % of the respondent group stated "too high cost for membership" as the main single reason for quitting the sports program when the research made by Rampf (1999) However, the real amount of cost is not the actual problem but rather the negative cost/benefit balance (IHRSA, 2012; Breuer et al., 2013). As regards to health, it is striking that, although on the one hand the reason "personal health does not allow further training" appears relatively strong, on the other hands however the cause "offered too little health wise" is practically not indicated. The significance test shows, on one side, that the quitting reasons were indeed evaluated very differently, and that a kind of generalized "mind set" is hardly reflected in the evaluation. How a concrete evaluation is made largely depends on the questioning direction, that is, on the presented quitting reason, and only on a much lesser scale on personality differences. Each individual quitting reason is evaluated differently as regards to significance, thus differentiated, from the basic trend over all quitting reasons.

Conclusion : Overall, it is found that only a few of the reasons offered

in the survey are also indicated in significant frequency as important for the quitting decision. These reasons have nothing to do with studio conditions, With the exception of membership costs, but rather, apart from the mentioned health problems, mainly address issues of time scheduling and prioritizing the training in relation to other areas of life.

The data show that the various quitting reasons were clearly evaluated differently by the respondents, and that there was apparently little generalized information on the motives of the quitting decision.

References

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