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# FITNESS AND HEALTH CENTRE EVALUATION BY RESIGNED FEMALE MEMBERS

**George F Zarotis**[1]

*Bergisch Ggladbach, Germany*

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## ABSTRACT

*The fitness sector is characterized by both an almost stagnating number of fitness clubs and an annual fluctuation of the total number of members within the fitness studios. In the evaluations and statistical analyses presented here, we examine the question of the extent to which the evaluations of a fitness studio made by women leaving the contract are age dependent. A total of 164 women who had cancelled their contract with a fitness studio were surveyed. Overall, the various aspects of the studio offer, and its surroundings were largely rated as "good", with the average values hovering around the value 2.*

**Keywords:** Fitness clubs, Fitness sector, Survey.

## REVIEW

The fitness sector is characterized by both an almost stagnating number of fitness clubs and an annual fluctuation of the total number of members within the fitness studios. In the evaluations and statistical analyses presented here, we examine the question of the extent to which the evaluations of a fitness studio made by women leaving the contract are age dependent. In other words, do studio evaluations - which probably played a role in the decision to leave - have a different basis with older women than with younger women? Do different needs and thus different preferences regarding studio conditions play a role here, depending on the phase of life? A total of 164 women who had cancelled their contract with a fitness studio were surveyed **(Table 1)**. The survey was conducted as a telephone enquiry about their actual decision. Overall, it was found that only a few of the reasons mentioned in the survey were also given as important for the decision to terminate the contract with a gym with significant frequency. Overall, the various aspects of the studio offer, and its surroundings were largely rated as "good", with the average values hovering around the value 2. The respondents particularly appreciated the trainers (friendliness, helpfulness, competence), followed by opening hours, trial training and first impressions. Membership costs and individual aspects such as spaciousness, music and ventilation were rated

[1] Correspondence to: George F. Zarotis, Von-Andreae-Str. 1 51427 Bergisch, Ggladbach, Germany, Tel: +49 1722070938; E-mail: drgzarotis@t-online.de

more critically, if not very poorly. With regard to the age of the respondents, there are only slight differences in evaluation between the age categories **(Table 2)**.

**Table 1. Sample distribution characteristic values.**

| | | Quantity | % | Mean value | Median | SD | Quantity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | | | | 43.3 | 43.5 | 11.4 | 164 |
| Membership duration (Years) | | | | 4.1 | 3.0 | 3.7 | 164 |
| Age categories | up to 25 Years | 9 | 5.5% | | | | |
| | 26-40 Years | 53 | 32.3% | | | | |
| | 41-55 Years | 82 | 50.0% | | | | |
| | >55 Years | 20 | 12.2% | | | | |
| | Total | 164 | 100.0% | | | | |

**Table 2. Mean values, Median and Distribution of the studio evaluations.**

| | Mean value | Median | SD | Quantity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Studio location | 1.8 | 2.0 | 0.7 | 164 |
| Parking facilities | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.8 | 164 |
| First impression | 1.5 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 164 |
| Opening hours | 1.4 | 1.0 | 0.6 | 164 |
| Studio atmosphere | 1.7 | 2.0 | 0.7 | 164 |
| Trial training | 1.5 | 1.0 | 0.6 | 164 |
| Membership costs | 2.4 | 2.0 | 0.8 | 164 |
| Strength training offer | 1.9 | 2.0 | 0.5 | 164 |
| Endurance training offer | 1.9 | 2.0 | 0.5 | 164 |
| Spaciousness | 2.3 | 2.0 | 0.7 | 164 |
| Music | 2.2 | 2.0 | 0.6 | 164 |
| Light | 1.8 | 2.0 | 0.6 | 163 |
| Ventilation | 2.2 | 2.0 | 0.7 | 163 |
| Locker rooms | 2.1 | 2.0 | 0.6 | 164 |
| Sanitary facilities | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.6 | 164 |
| Gastronomy | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.5 | 164 |
| Trainer's friendliness | 1.3 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 164 |
| Trainer's helpfulness | 1.3 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 164 |
| Trainer's competence | 1.3 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 164 |

As a rule, the mean values of the evaluations vary between 1.3 and 2.4, i.e. all of them are consistently in the positive evaluation range of the scale. Most items are slightly below or slightly above the value of 2, which is "good".

The best values are clearly found in the last three items in which the studio trainers are rated. Also opening hours, trial training and first impressions are on average closer to the evaluation level "very good" than to the evaluation level "good". The worst ratings - in relative terms - appear for the characteristics membership costs, spaciousness, music and ventilation.

In the Rampf study (1999), it is also clear that 19% of the group surveyed cited "too high membership costs" as the only main reason for leaving the sports program. However, the actual level of costs is not the real problem, but rather the negative cost-benefit balance.

There is also evidence in other studies that financial aspects of dropping out play an important role. In the survey by Breuer et al. (2013), as many as 45.1% of the 149 respondents cited "membership costs" as the reason why they stopped their fitness training.

Financial aspects are also mentioned in a study by IHRSA[2] (2013) as the main arguments for terminating membership in a fitness club. 52.2% of the 1,000 people surveyed said they could no longer afford their membership or rated it as expensive. Therefore, in future work, the collection of income should be considered in order to assess the impact on withdrawal.

It is important that the customer feels comfortable in the training area and in all other areas of the fitness club. A comfortable feeling is ensured, for example, by ensuring that the training area is not overcrowded with training equipment. Sufficient room to move during the workout ensures a positive training experience. Background music also creates a positive atmosphere. Sufficient ventilation is of particular importance in this context (Rampf, 1999).

A concentration of negative aspects with regard to training leads to a discontinuation of activity over time. Overall, these results confirm the assumption that drop-outs are more critical of the general conditions and thus support the results of other studies published on this topic (Pahmeier, 1994; Brehm & Eberhardt, 1995).

Differentiation by age groups shows only slight differences between age groups of a few tenths of a scale for the mean values in most evaluation categories.

Thus, the overall conclusion of the collected data is that only the supposed too high fees play an important role for quitting the membership. As a recommendation for action this suggests a more flexible and differentiated price policy on the part of the fitness company. This is the only way to respond to the individual needs of the members and thereby to achieve a better cost/benefit balance for them. A company might consider for example a price concept that includes a variety of class passes or memberships, such as Power Plate classes or cardio classes or an EMS (Electro-Myo-Stimulation) membership. Also, interesting could be a weekend membership or a morning pass from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with reduced fees or a sauna pass only. For persons who would like to exercise only sporadically or people who are often away on business or those who exercise elsewhere a 10-day pass, or a day pass would be appropriate. The aim of

all these measures is to maintain member loyalty and to customize the membership to changed life circumstances.

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