Development of the Motives of Long-Term Customers of Health-Oriented Fitness Companies During Membership

George F. Zarotis¹» Walter Tokarski²

¹University of the Aegean, Faculty of Human Sciences, Rhodes, Greece. ²German Sport University, Cologne, Germany. Email: <u>zarotisg@rhodes.aegean.gr</u> (> Corresponding Author)

Abstract

Sustainable product and service improvements are necessary for fitness studios to develop a longterm market and remain competitive. This is extremely important since meeting client expectations can lead to customer happiness, which in turn improves customer loyalty and financial success. The fitness studio's value-added procedures should all be focused on meeting and exceeding client expectations. Athletes' unique preferences can be taken into consideration when creating offers thanks to insights from studies on motivations in fitness sports. On the other hand, because of the more focused target group orientation, marketing campaigns can be carried out more successfully. Longtime participants in the current study receive a motivation-related instruction on how to stay motivated to work out. The responders belonged to a health-oriented fitness club. The fifteen items on the survey were broken down into seven motivation-related categories. The surveys could be filled out on site or taken home, and they were available at the gym. 278 of the 350 questionnaires that were made were filled out. 79.4% was the response rate as a result. Members who have merely received equipment-based training make up the responders. There is a slight majority (just under 53%) of male respondents, making the gender ratio about equal. The poll respondents are 56.6 years old on average, with a 13.1-year range around the mean. The age distribution shows that while younger respondents are somewhat uncommon, the number of respondents in middle to senior age has increased dramatically. Among survey respondents who have been members for more than a year, the average membership duration is 11.6 years (With a variance of 7.5 years). Significant variations in the mean value were found in 4 out of the 17 significance tests. For four reasons, there is a noticeable variation in the length of membership. The durations of these four motivations vary from 2.3 to 4.0 years. It is possible to identify in detail the following important relationships between age and motives. The following significant correlations between the motivation and age can be found in individuals; they are also not considered to be the only negative effects of this particular symmetry (the correlation is based on the statistical significance of the medium-value difference): a) People who have the motive 'general improvement in physical fitness' are members for longer than those who do not have it (means 11.9 years to 7.9 years); b) People who have the motive 'positive influence on physical complaints' and use the term 'cardiovascular complaints' as a synonym for their physical complaints are members for a shorter period than those who do not have it (means 8.7 years to 12.4 years); c) people who name the motive 'independent training planning and control' stay longer than people who do not name it (means 12.8 years to 10.5 years) and d) people who name the motive 'preparation for their own sport' (means 15.2 years to 11.3 years). To create lasting customer loyalty, it is therefore important to thoroughly and seriously examine the motives of the customers, to know and evaluate them and to give appropriate personal action and fitness recommendations. The knowledge gained also contributes to the long-term success of fitness clubs and to improving the image of fitness sports in general.

Keywords: Customer Loyalty, Health-oriented Fitness Companies, Membership Duration, Motivation, Motives.

1. Introduction

Due to the alienation of labour, rising incomes, and changing traditional societal values, the two primary spheres of existence, "work" and "leisure," are becoming less and less prominent. Sport, as a part of leisure, is likewise impacted by these fundamental changes. There are emerging sports that satisfy the need for adventure, pleasure, and enjoyment while also taking health factors into account. Fitness-related sports are a good example. Among other human addictions and desires, they combine the need for self-expression, the fixation on youth, the quest for one's own identity, and the desire to maintain and improve one's health (Zarotis, 1999; Zarotis, 2021). To meet their needs and preferences, sports providers need to be aware of the psychological and motivational factors that influence people's leisure sports activity. The motivations driving recreational activities and sports in general can be better understood by conducting research on motivation (Zarotis et al., 2002; Zarotis, 2021). Motivational psychology starts with the question of why, since it looks at both the environmental and internal factors that affect human behaviour. It explains the diversity of this human activity using the sociological and psychological terms

"motive" and "motivation," which also allude to a fictional construct. This hypothetical construct, which is based on behavioural observations and theories, provides an explanation for a phenomenon that cannot be directly observed or measured (Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 2010; Zarotis, 2020; Zarotis, 2021). The target conduct is the focus of motivational psychology. Motivation affects which states are avoided, which goals are pursued, and how much effort and persistence are put into them. It is the result of the interaction between organismal and situational factors. Motivators increase awareness of events, rewards, and circumstances that are likely to satisfy demands. These rewards have a powerful emotional pull. Rewards engage or trigger latent evaluative dispositions called motivations, which then show up as motivation and conduct (Puca & Schüler, 2017). Internal motivation and motivation from external sources are the two categories of motivation. Extrinsic motivation is characterised by outside factors such as avoiding punishment, upholding social prestige, or monetary values. When requirements that come from extrinsically motivated conduct rather than the behaviour itself are supplied by replacement methods, this is referred to as extrinsic. The real satisfaction of desires is not directly impacted by the initial activity. Rewards, which frequently mandate the work input alone, are ineffective in and of themselves since they do not permit the instant satisfaction of needs (Kroehler & Berti, 2014). It matters because the object itself generates intrinsic motivation. The stimulating potential of intrinsic motivation cannot be realised unless the fundamental needs of extrinsic motivation are partially met. People search for new non-material experiences only when their material existence is relatively secure (Reinhardt, 2018; Zarotis, 2020; Zarotis, 2021). Csikszentmihalyi asserts that the optimal balance between performance competence and performance requirements is necessary for intrinsic motivation. This optimum, which pushes people without being overly demanding and therefore generates a sense of success, is found in the flow area. According to Csikszentmihalyi, flow arises from the tension that exists between a person's level of aptitude and talents and the expectations of their environment. The behaviour itself is what makes it fulfilling since internal motivation is different from external incentive. Behaviour and need satisfaction occur simultaneously. Since needs are satisfied without the aid of external rewards, intrinsic behaviour fosters a positive sense of freedom. As a result, when motivated by internal variables, the same job may be viewed as simple and fulfilling; when motivated by extrinsic rewards, it may be viewed as difficult and unpleasant. According to Csikszentmihalyi's research on intrinsically motivated behaviour, any activity can be internally gratifying if it is well-designed and our skills align with the requirements (Csikszentmihalyi & Jackson, 2000; Schueler et al., 2020; Zarotis, 2021). The question of why people do sports is particularly important to those who work in the sports industry. The solution to this issue not only simplifies human behaviour but also provides new insights into methodology, didactics, and the design of sports programs. Rather of being monocausal, the motives behind recreational sports are rooted in intricate, multi-motivated frameworks that have historical, social, psychological, and physical bases. (Beckmann et al., 2009; Elbe, 2020). The growth of fitness sports was primarily due to shifts in consumer tastes. Competition and performance were replaced by factors like well-being, enjoyment, relaxation, exercise, and health (Dilger, 2008). Understanding motivations in the context of sport is essential for the numerous scientific disciplines of sport. On the one hand, it is possible to identify control systems in fitness studios as driven by financial goals. Like this, certain motivational characteristics — which may be seen as either excessive or insufficient motivation — can be crucial for enhancing performance from the perspective of training science. The psychological reasons for the behaviour are also significant when contrasted with other activities. Training must be tailored to customer motives to design products, target group marketing, and training with the individual in mind (Hackfort, 2001; Zarotis, 2021). A thorough picture of the present fitness incentives seems to exist at this moment because the motivations for fitness have been the focus of a great deal of research in recent years. Even when a certain stability is attributed to the person's motivational orientation, a change may nevertheless occur, for instance, due to social changes or personal circumstances. Additionally, it is likely that research undertaken at different times or with different focus points will have varied motivational orientations. Both social factors and, for example, changes in the sector may contribute to these differences. The necessity of regular evaluations of motivational orientations from both an economic and psychological perspective is emphasised by this review. Comparing the objective of determining the underlying motives and individual prerequisites should be helpful to better consider individual objectives when developing the offer and providing training support (Middelkamp & Steenbergen, 2012). From a psychological standpoint, expectations regarding the outcomes of activities are linked to the motivational phase. First, a specific goal is associated with a condition that needs to be fulfilled by carrying out predetermined tasks (Nitsch, 2004). A helpful viewpoint on their characteristics and significance can be gained from research on fitness incentives. They usually shed light on the factors that contribute to the appeal of fitness activities, making it possible to distinguish between different fitness motivations across different demographics (Zarotis & Tokarski, 2005). In this context, it is important to emphasise that there are methods to distinguish between the motivations for joining, continuing, and departing. According to Gabler (2002) and Hackfort et al. (2004), it is also possible that the original reasons for selecting a fitness membership change over time, lose their significance, or are replaced by several new or different considerations. Developing and planning products for a specific target group always starts with an understanding of the factors that influence the population's engagement in leisure sports. This can attract new fitness athletes and retain current members (Zarotis, 2021). Essential demands on the management of a fitness club are therefore the creation of a good social atmosphere during training, time-efficient training programs, fun during the training, fulfilment of training goals and intensive support mechanisms (Tokarski et al., 2023a). The study included 278 members of fitness clubs. In addition to sociodemographic data including age, gender, length of membership, and prior club memberships, 15 reasons for joining a fitness club were asked about in multiple-choice answer questions. These fifteen explanations fall into the following seven categories:

Asian Business Research Journal, 2025, 10(1):23-29

| Table 1. | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| Fitness/Health | General improvement of physical fitness Cardiovascular training with emphasis on endurance | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | Positive impact on physical problems | | | | |
| | Cardiovascular problems | | | | |
| | Orthopaedic problems | | | | |
| Appearance | Weight loss (General fat loss) | | | | |
| | Specific bodyshaping | | | | |
| | Bodybuilding | | | | |
| Psychological experience | Compensation for daily routine and occupational stress | | | | |
| | Pleasant and relaxed training | | | | |
| Cognitive dimension | Continuous guidance and training control | | | | |
| - | Information about exercise effects and anatomical background knowledge | | | | |
| Social dimension | Being able to plan and control training independently | | | | |
| | Training with a partner | | | | |
| Performance | Specific sporting performance | | | | |
| Motor dimension | Supplement to my own sport | | | | |
| | Preparation for my own sport | | | | |

If the individual answered that they were suffering physical problems, they were further asked if these complaints were orthopaedic or cardiovascular, using multiple-choice questions.

The assessments that follow look at whether age has a substantial impact on how frequently motives are mentioned. The presentation is first restricted to solely descriptive statistics, which describe the frequency distributions throughout the entire set of respondents. These assessments do not establish or test hypotheses about potential correlations, whether between motives or about how motives depend on other qualities (Willimczik & Ennigkeit, 2018).

2. Methodology

2.1. Survey Methodology

A survey of the members of a big metropolitan fitness club was conducted. The 15 elements in the questionnaire can be categorised into seven smaller dimensions. A total of 15 multiple-choice answers are available for the questions regarding the reasons behind fitness training in this studio. In one instance, two more subquestions on complaints are included (the question regarding physical complaints as a purpose). The sub-questions and bits of information regarding motives make up a total of 15, or 17, from which the responder can choose or not choose each motive. The fitness facility had the questionnaires available for people to fill out on site or take away. The individual motives were formulated as multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire. At the data level, the options 'mentioned' or 'not mentioned' are thus possible for each motive. The length of membership of the respondents was requested as an entry in years, but only for those respondents who had been members for at least 12 months. This applies to 96.4% of the respondents (268 of 278). For descriptive purposes, the information on the length of membership was also divided into four categories:

- Up to 5 years
- 5 to 10 years
- 11-15 years
- Over 15 years

The duration of membership in years is a metrically scaled characteristic. Stating or not stating the individual motives produces two case groups in each case. T-tests for independent samples are used to test the significance of the correlations with age. The t-test is used to check whether two groups differ significantly in their mean values. If the mean value of the length of membership of those respondents who mentioned a motive differs significantly from the mean value of those people who did not mention this motive, a connection between age and choice of motive is proven. This can then be interpreted causally as meaning that the length of membership influences the choice of motive. Since the sample size is well above N=30, a separate test for the normal distribution of the dependent variable is not carried out. In this case, according to the central limit theorem, we can assume that the t-test is robust about a violation of the normal distribution assumption. This means that the t-test also produces correct results in the significance calculation if the data in the dependent variable are not normally distributed (Willimczik & Ennigkeit, 2018). About the model assumption of homogeneous variances, the prerequisite is checked in each case using the Levene test. In the event of a significant deviation from the model assumption of homogeneous variances, the significance is calculated using the corrected t-test (Welch test), which takes the variance differences into account in the significance test.

3. Results

3.1. Sample Description

There are N=278 responders in the sample. With a tiny majority (just under 53%) of male respondents, the gender distribution is nearly equal. The respondents' ages range from 13.1 to 56.6 years old on average. Younger respondents are quite uncommon, since the age distribution clearly demonstrates an accumulation of respondents in middle to old age.

Asian Business Research Journal, 2025, 10(1):23-29

| Feature | Manifestation | Number | % | Mean | Std. dev. |
|--|---------------------|--------|---------|------|-----------|
| | Female | 131 | 47.10% | | |
| Candan | Male | 147 | 52.90% | | |
| Gender Age categories Duration of membership Age in years | Diverse | 0 | 0.00% | | |
| | In total | 278 | 100.00% | | |
| | up to 40 years | 31 | 11.20% | | |
| | 41 to 55 years | 81 | 29.10% | | |
| Age categories | 56 to 65 years | 94 | 33.80% | | |
| | older than 65 years | 72 | 25.90% | | |
| | In total | 278 | 100.00% | | |
| Duration of membership | < 5 years | 63 | 23.5% | | |
| | 5-10 years | 77 | 28.7% | | |
| | 11-15 years | 46 | 17.2% | | |
| | > 15 years | 82 | 30.6% | | |
| | In total | 268 | 100.0% | | |
| Age in years | | 278 | | 56.6 | 13.1 |
| duration of membership | | 268 | | 11.6 | 7.5 |

Table 2. Distribution of age, gender, and length of membership in the sample.

The duration of membership is over a year for 96.4% of respondents (268 out of 278). In two cases (0.7%), it is less than 6 months and in 8 cases (2.9%), it is between half a year and a year. For those surveyed who had been members for more than a year, the average membership duration was 11.6 years (range: 7.5 years). 107 respondents indicated that they had previously been members of another fitness studio. The average duration of these previous memberships was 6.5 years (range: 5.7 years).

3.2. Influence of Membership Duration on the Mention of Motives – Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 shows the mean values (MV) and standard deviations (SD) of the membership duration when the respective motives are mentioned or not mentioned. Figure 1 shows the same information as a grouped bar chart.

Descriptively, in most cases there are only slight differences in the mean values of the duration of membership between people who have named the corresponding motive and those who have not named the motive. The mean value differences in the duration of membership are – depending on the motive – between 0 and 4.0 years. From a purely descriptive point of view, the differences in the motives of 'influencing physical fitness' and

'preparing for my sport' are particularly striking. The differences in the motives of planning and controlling training independently and supplementing my sport are somewhat smaller, but still clearly recognisable, and to a limited extent in the motive of endurance-oriented cardiovascular training. All differences go in the direction that when the motive is mentioned, the respondents have been members for longer on average than when the motive is not mentioned.

When the motive of 'influencing physical complaints' was mentioned, there is also a clear difference with regard to the specification in the form of cardiovascular complaints, but here the difference is that the respondents tend to be younger when this specification of physical complaints is mentioned. When it comes to 'orthopaedic complaints,' the differences in the length of membership are only slight again.

| Table 3. Length of membership and reasons given. | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----|--------|------------|-------|------|--|--|
| | Not mentioned | | Called | | In To | otal | | |
| Motives | Duration of me | | | ıembership | | | | |
| | MW | SD | MW | SD | MW | SD | | |
| Motive area: Fitness / Health | | | | | | | | |
| Improve physical fitness in general | 7.9 | 5.5 | 11.9 | 7.6 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Endurance-orientated cardiovascular training | 10.9 | 7.9 | 12.5 | 6.9 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Positive influence on physical complaints | 11.2 | 8.2 | 11.8 | 7.1 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| if yes: Cardiovascular complaints | 12.4 | 6.9 | 8.7 | 7.1 | 11.8 | 7.1 | | |
| if yes: Orthopaedic complaints | 12.6 | 7.7 | 11.7 | 7.0 | 11.8 | 7.1 | | |
| Motive area: Appearance | | | | | | | | |
| Weight reduction | 12.0 | 7.7 | 11.2 | 7.3 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Specialised figure training (Bodyshaping) | 11.4 | 7.0 | 12.6 | 9.2 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Training to build muscles (Bodybuilding) | 11.4 | 7.5 | 12.0 | 7.5 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Motive area: Mental experience | | | | | | | | |
| Balance out every day and professional stress | 11.6 | 8.2 | 11.6 | 7.0 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Exercise in a pleasant and relaxed way | 11.2 | 6.8 | 11.8 | 7.7 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Motive area: Cognitive dimension | | | | | | | | |
| Continuous guidance / Training control | 11.1 | 7.5 | 12.5 | 7.4 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Info on exercise effect / Anatomical knowledge | 11.4 | 7.5 | 12.1 | 7.5 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Motive area: Social dimension | | | | | | | | |
| Planning and managing training independently soon | 10.5 | 7.3 | 12.8 | 7.6 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Training with a partner or other people | 11.7 | 7.6 | 11.3 | 7.1 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Motive area: Performance | | | | | | | | |
| Concrete athletic performance | 11.8 | 7.8 | 11.1 | 6.8 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Motive area: Motor dimension | | | | | | | | |
| Addition to my sport | 11.3 | 7.1 | 13.4 | 9.1 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |
| Preparation for my sport | 11.3 | 7.5 | 15.2 | 6.9 | 11.6 | 7.5 | | |

3.3. Effects of Length of Membership on the Stated Reasons – Significance Test

Table 4 shows the results of the 17 t-tests for independent samples. The significance (probability of the validity of the null hypothesis in the population) and the associated test statistics, i.e. the t-value and its degrees of freedom (df), are given.

Degrees of freedom that show non-integer values indicate that in this case, due to inhomogeneous variances, the significance was calculated using the Welch test.

The results show significant mean differences in 4 of the 17 significance tests. In three cases, the age differences are significant at the 5% level, and in one case at the 1% level. In two other cases (endurance-oriented cardiovascular training and supplementation for my sport), the significance is only just missed, with a probability of error of < 0.1.

| | Table 4 | Significance tes | t of reasons | given for | participation | and length | of membership. |
|--|---------|------------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|------------|----------------|
|--|---------|------------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|------------|----------------|

| | Not mentioned | | Called | | In total | |
|---|---------------|------------------------|--------|-----|----------|-----|
| Motives | Du | Duration of membership | | | | |
| | MW | SD | MW | SD | MW | SD |
| Motive area: Fitness / Health | · | | | | | |
| Improve physical fitness in general | 7.9 | 5.5 | 11.9 | 7.6 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Endurance-orientated cardiovascular training | 10.9 | 7.9 | 12.5 | 6.9 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Positive influence on physical complaints | 11.2 | 8.2 | 11.8 | 7.1 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| if yes: Cardiovascular complaints | 12.4 | 6.9 | 8.7 | 7.1 | 11.8 | 7.1 |
| if yes: Orthopaedic complaints | 12.6 | 7.7 | 11.7 | 7.0 | 11.8 | 7.1 |
| Motive area: Appearance | | | | | | |
| Weight reduction | 12.0 | 7.7 | 11.2 | 7.3 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Specialised figure training (Bodyshaping) | 11.4 | 7.0 | 12.6 | 9.2 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Training to build muscles (Bodybuilding) | 11.4 | 7.5 | 12.0 | 7.5 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Motive area: Mental experience | | | | | | |
| Balance out every day and professional stress | 11.6 | 8.2 | 11.6 | 7.0 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Exercise in a pleasant and relaxed way | 11.2 | 6.8 | 11.8 | 7.7 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Motive area: Cognitive dimension | | | | | | |
| Continuous guidance / Training control | 11.1 | 7.5 | 12.5 | 7.4 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Info on exercise effect / Anatomical knowledge | 11.4 | 7.5 | 12.1 | 7.5 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Motive area: Social dimension | | | | | | |
| Planning and managing training independently soon | 10.5 | 7.3 | 12.8 | 7.6 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Training with a partner or other people | 11.7 | 7.6 | 11.3 | 7.1 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Motive area: Performance | | | | | | |
| Concrete athletic performance | 11.8 | 7.8 | 11.1 | 6.8 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Motive area: Motor dimension | | | | | | |
| Addition to my sport | 11.3 | 7.1 | 13.4 | 9.1 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Preparation for my sport | 11.3 | 7.5 | 15.2 | 6.9 | 11.6 | 7.5 |

In detail, the following significant correlations of motives with age can be found, which are not to be regarded as pure chance effects of this specific sampling (the mention is made in descending statistical significance of the mean differences):

- People who state the motive 'to improve general physical fitness' have been members for longer than people who do not state this motive (means 11.9 years vs. 7.9 years).
- People who want to positively influence physical complaints and who then specified 'cardiovascular complaints' are members for a shorter period of time than people who do not mention this motive (means 8.7 years to 12.4 years).
- People who state the motive 'planning and controlling training independently' are members for longer than people who do not state this motive (mean values 12.8 years to 10.5 years).
- People who state the motive 'preparation for my sport' are members for longer than people who do not state this motive (mean values 15.2 years to 11.3 years).

4. Discussion of the Results

For athletes, the question of motivation for sporting activity is particularly relevant. Answering this question not only helps to make human behaviour more understandable, but also provides new insights for methodology and didactics as well as for the design of sporting activities. This optimisation of processes can lead to positive training successes. Lehnert et al. (2011) require training programmes to take into account the different needs of members, so that loyalty can be strengthened independently of the fitness club context.

For most motives, there are no statistically significant dependencies on the length of membership, so the empirical differences could mostly be explained as random fluctuations in the context of sampling. For four motives, there is a significant difference in the length of membership, with the differences in these four motives ranging between 2.3 and 4.0 years.

Longer membership is associated with more frequent mention of the motives 'general improvement of physical fitness,' 'planning and controlling training independently,' and 'preparation for my sport.' The majority of fitness athletes feel that their health is in danger due to the rising number of lifestyle diseases brought on by contemporary industrial societies. Through appropriate recreational sports, they attempt to preserve and advance their health as much as possible (Zarotis, 1999; Zarotis et al., 2011; Zarotis, 2021). Additionally, studies continue to demonstrate the beneficial effects of consistent fitness training on human health (Zarotis & Tokarski, 2020; Tokarski et al., 2023b). In their scientific study, Riess et al. (2014) also demonstrate this health-promoting effect, particularly with regard to combined strength and endurance training. According to other research, back pain can be avoided (Stephan et al., 2011).

The motive complex 'social dimension' is represented by two items, one of which describes the ability for selfdetermination and participation, and the other the ability to co-operate. The ability for self-determination and participation is encouraged by the free satisfaction of one's own needs, the pursuit of self-fulfilment and selfassertion. This independence is characterised by the ability to make decisions. The athlete should be given freedom of choice in order to be able to influence the type of sport they do. Intrinsic motivations can only fully develop their incentive potential when extrinsic motivations have been largely fulfilled (Zarotis & Tokarski, 2023; Zarotis & Tokarski, 2024).

With the individual motive 'preparation for sport,' fitness athletes want to improve their motor skills and abilities with the help of fitness training to prepare optimally for their sport (Zarotis, 1999; Zarotis, 2021).

This suggests that the individuals in this study are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. However, as already mentioned, purpose-oriented extrinsic motives are not enough in the long term to remain loyal to fitness sports. This may explain the relatively high fluctuation in the fitness industry (Zarotis, 1999; Zarotis, 2021). The lasting commitment of the participants to their club and the above-average duration of membership of 11.6 years in the present study can be attributed to their strong intrinsic drive. 107 respondents stated that they had previously been members of another fitness studio. The average duration of these previous memberships in other clubs was 6.5 years. From this, it can be concluded that mainly intrinsic motives are addressed in their current club.

In contrast, shorter membership shows a statistically significant increase in the mention of the specific motive of influencing physical complaints in the form of cardiovascular complaints. Certain significant correlations with the duration of membership can therefore be found in the fitness/health, social and motor skills motivation areas. By contrast, the appearance, psychological experience, cognitive and performance dimensions show no correlations in their mention with the duration of membership.

A promising basis for the future progress of the sector is the growing awareness and willingness of people to actively engage in their own fitness. It is therefore important that all providers make every effort to retain customers as much as possible from the outset by means of appropriate customer retention measures. It is important to actively exploit the opportunities that arise in a changing environment and to bring about proactive development. It is always important to develop a quality concept from the customer's point of view; it must focus on the customer and their personal goals. Quality certification alone is not sufficient as a control measure, as it is only partially accepted by customers. Rather, a holistic process should be started that designs measures for the continuous improvement of training support - the central service of a fitness studio - based on quality analyses of customers and providers. It is likely that the needs, desires and goals of members are not being met or achieved, which is one reason for their departure. Therefore, it is important that health-oriented fitness training is based on intrinsic motivation from the outset. Furthermore, positive experiences with fitness training should be encouraged and negative ones reduced in order to improve the sport-related experience of consequences (Zarotis et al., 2017; Zarotis, 2021). All things considered, the analysis of motives for market segmentation is a reasonable strategy since it makes it possible to determine the reasons behind going to a fitness centre and, consequently, to determine the beginning points for a market development tailored to a particular target group.

5. Conclusion

The way society views fitness sports has evolved throughout time. These days, being physically fit is an indication of an active, health-conscious, and body-aware lifestyle. Among other factors, the industry's significant emphasis on health has helped to halt the downward trend. This allows people to meaningfully combine the goals of relaxation, health care, and physical exercise. Understanding the motivations of fitness sports fans might help to better customise the offers to meet their individual needs. Additionally, more targeted marketing might result from a more focused approach to the target audience. For about a quarter of the motives for fitness training, the length of membership has a significant influence on the mention of these motives; this is not the case for the other three quarters of the motives. The reasons of 'general improvement in physical fitness', 'independent planning and control of training' and 'preparation for a particular sport' are more likely to be mentioned by people who have been members of the gym for a long time. In contrast, 'the positive influence on cardiovascular complaints' is more likely to be mentioned as a reason by people who have been members for a shorter period of time. Without a doubt, only happy clients will genuinely stick with a fitness supplier. While some fitness providers steer clear of customer satisfaction entirely, others attempt — sometimes successfully — to conduct regular surveys of their members and clients. Some fitness providers find it challenging to assess and analyse the data they collect, even if the fundamentals of empirical survey methodology should be considered. Nonetheless, taking significant action based on survey results might help to affect customer satisfaction and, consequently, the desire to keep consumers in a sustainable way. Long-term client loyalty can only be attained by carefully and seriously identifying, comprehending, and classifying their motivations as well as by offering suitable, tailored advice for fitness and action. The knowledge acquired also contributes to the long-term prosperity of fitness centres.

References

Beckmann, J., Froehlich, S. M., & Elbe, A. (2009). Motivation und Volition. Grundlagen der Sportpsychologie, 11-562.

- Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Jackson, S. A. (2000). Flow im Sport. Der Schluessel zur optimalen Erfahrung und Leistung. Muenchen: BLV-Buchverlag.
- Dilger, E. (2008). Die Fitnessbewegung in Deutschland. Schorndorf: Hofmann.
- Elbe, A. (2020). Motive und Motivation im Sport. Sport in Kultur und Gesellschaft, 1-14.
- Gabler, H. (2002). Motive im Sport: Motivationspsychologische Analysen und empirische Studien. Schorndorf: Hofmann.

Hackfort, D. (2001). Psychologische Aspekte des Freizeitsports. In: H. Gabler, J.R. Nitsch & R. Singer (Hrsg.), Einfuehrung in die Sportpsychologie. Teil 2: Anwendungsfelder. 2. erweiterte und ueberarbeitete Auflage (207-236), Schorndorf: Hofmann-Verlag. Hackfort, D., Regoes, R. & Schlattmann, A. (2004). Effekte beim Handeln. 100 Beispiele aus Sport, Beruf und Alltag. Aachen: Meyer

& Meyer-Verlag.

Heckhausen, J., & Heckhausen, H. (2010). Motivation und Handeln (4., ueberarb. und erw. Aufl.). Berlin: Springer. Kroehler, A., & Berti, S. (2014). Anwendung der sport- und bewegungsbezogenen Selbstkonkordanz auf den Leistungssport. Zeitschrift für

Sportpsychologie, 21 (3), 119-126.

Lehnert, K., Sudeck, G. & Conzelmann, A. (2011). BMZI-Berner Motiv- und Zielinventar im Freizeit - und Gesundheitssport. Diagnostica, 57 (3), 146-159.

Middelkamp, J. & Steenbergen, J. (2012). Kundenbindung im Fitnessstudio. In: M. Baart de la Faille-Deutekom, J. Middelkamp & J. Steenbergen (Hrsg.), The state of research in the global fitness industry (128-139). Zeist: HDD Group / Kennispraktijk.
Nitsch, J.R. (2004). Handlungstheoretische Grundlagen der Sportpsychologie. In: H. Gabler, J.R. Nitsch & R. Singer (Hrsg.), Einführung in die Sportpsychologie. Teil 1: Grundthemen. 4. unveraenderte Auflage (43-164), Schorndorf: Hofmann-Verlag.

Puca, R. M., & Schueler, J. (2017). Motivation. Allgemeine Psychologie, 223-249.

Reinhardt, C. (2018). Flow-Erleben im Sport: Empirische Untersuchungen eines motivationsbezogenen Phaenomens (1. Aufl.). Hamburg: Kovač.

Riess K. J., Haykowsky M., Lawrance R., Tomczak C. R., Welsh R., Lewanczuk R., Tymchak W., Haennel R. G. & Gourishankar S. (2014). Exercise training improves aerobic capacity, muscle strength, and quality of life in renal transplant recipients. Applied Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism, 39, 566-571.

Schueler, J., Wegner, M., & Plessner, H. (2020). Sportpsychologie: Grundlagen und Anwendung (1. Aufl.). Berlin: Springer.

Stephan, A., Goebel, S. & Schmidtbleicher, D. (2011). Effekte eines maschinengestützten Krafttrainings in der Behandlung chronischen Rueckenschmerzes. Deutsche Zeitschrift für Sportmedizin, 62 (3), 69-74.
 Tokarski W., Tosounidis A., Zarotis G. (2023a). Dropout & Prevention in Fitness Sports. Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 8

(8), 234-239.

Tokarski W., Tosounidis A., Zarotis G. (2023b). The Need for Health & Prevention through Fitness Sports. European Journal of Sport Sciences 2 (4), 34-42.

Willimczik, K., & Ennigkeit, F. (2018). Statistik im Sport: Grundlagen - Verfahren - Anwendungen; mit Online-Uebungsaufgaben an einem realen Datensatz (5., voellig ueberarb. u. erw. Aufl.). Hamburg: Feldhaus, Edition Czwalina.

Zarotis, G. F. (1999). Ziel Fitness-Club: Motive im Fitness-Sport. Gesundheit? Aussehen? Ausgleich? Spaß? Aachen: Meyer & Meyer.

Zarotis, G. F., Tosunidis, A., & Zarotis, I. F. (2002). Motive zum Fitness-Sport. Forschung Innovation Technologie: Das F.I.T.-Wissenschaftsmagazin der Deutschen Sporthochschule Köln, 7 (1), 4-12.

Zarotis, G., Tokarski, W. (2005). Gender-specific differences for motivation in health-oriented sports and fitness facilities. Spectrum free time, 28 (2), 81-89.

Zarotis, G., Tokarski, W., Kontakos, A., & Katsagolis, A. (2011). Free time. Physical activity, Health and Quality of Life. Athen/Zefyri: Diadrasi.

Zarotis G., Athanailidis I., Tosunidis A., Mastrogiannopoulos N. (2017). Drop-Out in Fitness-Sport. Comparing the general relevance of Reasons for quitting. TRENDS

in Sport Sciences, 24 (4), 175-181. Zarotis G. & Tokarski W. (2020). The Effect of Recreational Sports on Human Health.

Journal of Sports and Physical Education, 7 (3), 25-33.

Zarotis G. F. (2020). Psychological Aspects of Leisure and Mass Sports. East African Scholars Journal of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences, 2 (3), 38-48.

Zarotis G. F. (2021). Motives of Long-Term Participants in Recreational & Fitness Sport from a Socio-Psychological Perspective. Scholars Zarotis G. P. (2021). Molives of Long-Term Participants in Recreational & Philess Sport from a Socio-1 sychological Terspective. Scholars Journal of Economics Business and Management, 8 (8), 219-227.
 Zarotis, G. & Tokarski, W. (2023). Society, Recreation and Health. Fitness Sports: Motives, Dropout & Evaluation of Facilities. Scholars'

Press: Dodo Books Indian Ocean Ltd. Publishing Group London.

Zarotis, G. & Tokarski, W. (2024). Age-Specific Motivational Differences Among Long-Term Male Clients of Health-Focused Fitness Companies. Journal of Management World, 2024 (4), 224-229.