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Exploring consumer behaviour in the fitness industry: An evidence-based analysis of motivating factors in Cyprus

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Abstract: Consumer motivation within the growing and increasingly competitive fitness sector has attracted significant research interest, driven by an expanding global commitment to health, wellness, and physical activity. Understanding the primary motivational elements influencing consumer decisions and active involvement in fitness is essential for industry professionals aiming to create targeted offerings, enhance customer engagement, and improve overall consumer satisfaction and retention. The fitness industry has experienced significant growth globally, driven by increasing health awareness and lifestyle changes. However, sustaining long-term consumer engagement remains a challenge. This study investigates the motivational factors influencing consumer behaviour in Cyprus's fitness sector, addressing gaps in regional research and offering insights tailored to this unique market. The study aims to identify and critically evaluate the key intrinsic and extrinsic factors driving consumer motivation in Cyprus's fitness industry, providing actionable recommendations for stakeholders to enhance engagement and retention. Employing a quantitative research approach, the study utilized a structured online survey to gather data from a sample of 390 individuals actively involved or interested in fitness activities in Cyprus. The survey assessed intrinsic motivational factors as well as external influences on fitness behaviour. Findings highlighted a diverse spectrum of consumer motivations, dominated by goals such as muscle gain, weight loss, overall physical health, and mental well-being. Moreover, external factors including competitive pricing, equipment quality, convenient facility location, supportive staff members, superior service quality, high hygienic standards, and appealing facility atmosphere were identified as significant drivers of motivation. Practical strategies, specifically goal setting, accountability partnerships, and frequent variations in workout routines, also emerged as influential contributors to sustained fitness commitment. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of recognizing these multifaceted motivational factors, offering valuable insights for fitness stakeholders aiming to develop tailored, effective strategies that encourage continuous engagement, strengthen market presence, and promote community wellness in Cyprus. However, the study's reliance on convenience sampling and self-reported data may limit generalizability. Seasonal biases and the absence of qualitative methods also constrain the depth of insights.

Keywords: Fitness industry; Consumer behaviour; Consumer motivation; Fitness engagement; Motivational factors; Cyprus

1. Introduction

The examination of consumer motivation in the fitness industry reflects broader societal changes in health awareness and lifestyle priorities. Recent years have seen a transformation in how individuals approach physical activity, moving beyond mere exercise to encompass holistic well-being [1]. This shift has been driven by multiple factors, including advances in health research, widespread digital health information, and growing recognition of inactivity as a major health risk [2]. The global fitness industry has expanded significantly as a result, with projections indicating continued growth in both traditional and digital fitness sectors.[3]. Despite this expansion, maintaining long-term engagement remains a persistent challenge.

Industry data shows that many new gym members discontinue their participation within months, suggesting current approaches may not fully address the complex factors influencing sustained involvement. [4]. This pattern highlights the need for a deeper understanding of what initially draws people to fitness activities versus what keeps them engaged over time. The current fitness landscape presents additional complexities, including evolving consumer expectations, economic pressures on discretionary spending, and the proliferation of digital alternatives to traditional gym settings [5].

The study approaches fitness motivation through a perspective that considers psychological, social, and practical dimensions. Established behavioural theories provide a blueprint for examining how different types of motivators interact and evolve throughout an individual's fitness journey. Contemporary research reveals important variations across demographic groups, with different age cohorts and cultural contexts demonstrating distinct patterns in their fitness priorities and preferences. These differences have meaningful implications for how fitness services are designed and delivered [6]. Modern fitness consumers exhibit sophisticated expectations, seeking experiences that align with their personal goals, schedules, and social preferences. This has led to significant industry changes, with successful operators developing comprehensive wellness environments that extend beyond physical training to include mental health support and community elements [7]. The integration of technology has added further complexity, creating new opportunities for engagement through digital platforms and wearable devices while also raising expectations for personalized experiences.

The research context of Cyprus offers particular insights into fitness motivation within Mediterranean cultures, where outdoor living and social connections traditionally play important roles in physical activity patterns [8]. The study examines how these factors interact with global fitness trends and digital innovations. Focusing on both the initial drivers of fitness participation and the factors that support ongoing engagement, the investigation provides a complete picture of consumer behaviour in this evolving industry. The fitness industry's evolution presents new considerations for understanding consumer motivation. Traditional distinctions between different types of fitness providers have become less clear as many facilities now offer hybrid models combining physical and digital experiences [5]. Consumer expectations have similarly evolved, with increasing demand for personalized, flexible, and socially connected fitness solutions. These developments require updated approaches to studying fitness motivation that account for both enduring psychological principles and changing industry conditions [3].

The study builds upon established behavioural theories while incorporating contemporary research on fitness consumption patterns. Psychological frameworks help explain the internal and external factors that influence exercise participation, including personal goals, social influences, and environmental conditions. These theoretical foundations are examined in relation to current fitness industry trends, creating connections between academic concepts and real-world applications.

Leaning on the above, this study aims to identify, explore, and critically analyse the key underlying factors that motivate and influence consumer behaviour within the fitness industry in Cyprus.

1.1. Significance of the study

This research represents a pioneering effort to systematically examine consumer behaviour within Cyprus's fitness industry, establishing new benchmarks for understanding regional fitness motivations. Unlike previous studies that have predominantly focused on larger Western markets, our investigation uncovers unique cultural and behavioural patterns specific to the Cypriot context. The findings demonstrate how Cypriot consumers equally prioritize mental well-being alongside traditional physical fitness objectives, revealing a distinctive holistic wellness paradigm that distinguishes this Mediterranean market from others.

The methodological approach integrates rigorous quantitative analysis with practical industry applications, yielding novel insights about underemphasized retention drivers. Particularly significant is the identification of hygiene standards and social accountability mechanisms as critical yet previously overlooked factors influencing long-term customer engagement. These discoveries challenge prevailing industry assumptions while offering fresh perspectives for facility optimization and service innovation. The comprehensive age representation in our sample (13-56+) further enables a detailed examination of motivation dynamics across generational cohorts.

From an applied perspective, this research delivers substantial value to multiple stakeholder groups. Fitness operators gain empirically validated strategies for service customization, while marketers acquire culturally relevant frameworks for consumer engagement. Policymakers benefit from data-driven insights to combat sedentary lifestyles through targeted interventions. The study's implications extend beyond commercial applications to inform public health strategies in small island nations facing contemporary wellness challenges.

The academic contribution lies in developing a contextualized model of fitness motivation that accounts for regional specificities often absent in global studies. This work establishes a foundation for future research while providing immediate practical value through its actionable recommendations. The Cyprus-specific findings offer transferable insights for similar small markets while highlighting the importance of localized approaches in fitness industry research.

2. Research background

This section presents a theoretical perspective related to consumer motivation in the fitness industry. It critically examines existing literature on consumer behaviour and influential determinants, providing a foundation for a deeper understanding of factors driving fitness engagement among consumers in this sector.

2.1. Research context - The Fitness industry in Cyprus

The fitness industry in Cyprus has witnessed steady growth in recent years, driven by rising health consciousness and an increased emphasis on personal wellness among the population [8]. Fitness is increasingly becoming an important lifestyle component for Cypriots, with more individuals actively seeking ways to improve their physical health and overall quality of life. The sector is diverse, comprising private gyms, boutique studios, personal training services, wellness

centres, and digital fitness alternatives [9]. This diversity reflects the different tastes, preferences, and needs of consumers throughout the country, enabling them to select services that match their individual goals, schedules, and lifestyle requirements [1].

The industry has an estimated market size of €30–€40 million annually as of recent data. While the sector faced a decline during the 2009–2014 financial crisis, with GDP contributions dropping from €24.5 million to €12.4 million, recovery has been evident through increased registrations of Private Gymnastic Centres (PGCs), which numbered 480 by 2018. The industry's revenue rebounded to €23.4 million (0.14% of GDP) by 2016, reflecting renewed demand for fitness services. Key drivers include rising health awareness, urbanization (66.8% urban population), and tourism-linked wellness offerings. Membership penetration remains moderate (~8–10% of urban residents), with average fees at €30–€60/month. Women dominate gym participation (30% vs. 23% for men), and youth engagement is high (78% of 15–24-year-olds exercise). However, gaps in regulatory frameworks and data collection persist, highlighting opportunities for standardized growth and alignment with EU fitness trends [8].

Major urban cities across Cyprus, including Nicosia, Limassol, and Larnaca, have strong concentrations of fitness establishments, with ample opportunities catering to different consumer segments, from enthusiasts and professionals to beginners and older adults. Fitness businesses emphasize personalized attention, innovative training methods, and holistic wellness experiences to retain consumer loyalty and sustain engagement. Additionally, with the rising importance of digital fitness solutions worldwide, the Cypriot industry has adapted accordingly, increasingly offering online classes, virtual coaching, and on-demand training sessions [9]. Overall, the fitness industry in Cyprus continues to evolve, responding effectively to changing consumer demands and global wellness trends.

2.2. Consumer behaviour in the fitness industry

Consumer behaviour in the fitness industry is influenced by diverse personal, psychological, and external factors, determining how consumers make decisions, engage with fitness services, and sustain commitments to exercise [10]. Understanding these behaviours enables stakeholders within the fitness industry to effectively meet consumer needs and enhance overall service delivery. Typically, the decision-making process includes recognizing the need for fitness, gathering information, assessing available options, and ultimately making purchase decisions influenced by factors including cost, convenience, reputation, and perceived value [11].

Psychological factors, especially motivation and attitudes towards fitness, significantly shape consumer behaviour. Consumers enter fitness routines driven by multiple motives, including health improvement, physical appearance, social engagement, stress reduction, and general personal fulfilment [12]. Research consistently shows intrinsic motivation, reflecting personal enjoyment and internal satisfaction, is the predominant determinant for sustained exercise commitment. However, extrinsic factors [such as promotional offers, and attractive facilities] often

motivate initial engagement and may still play a complementary role over time, particularly for new entrants into the fitness space [4].

Social and interpersonal influences greatly impact consumer behaviour within the fitness industry. Consumers often rely on feedback, recommendations, or experiences from friends, family members, fitness influencers, or online reviews when choosing fitness facilities or services [13]. Social interactions, group classes, and trainer-client relationships notably enhance adherence, accountability, and ongoing engagement with fitness routines [4]. Additionally, the perceived social status of certain gyms or fitness facilities influences selection, as consumers may opt for gyms popularly viewed as socially prestigious or highly recommended by peer groups [14].

Practical considerations, including accessibility, affordability, quality of fitness programs, and available amenities, further influence consumer decisions. Convenient access and flexible membership options emerge as primary drivers of fitness facility choice, with consumers favouring locations close to home or workplaces and those offering personalized experiences [15]. The rise of digital fitness platforms and mobile applications has transformed consumer behaviour, enabling individuals to integrate effortlessly into busy lifestyles, demanding increasingly interactive, flexible, and convenient offerings [16].

Finally, demographic differences substantially affect consumer behaviour. Younger consumer segments often prioritize innovation, dynamic training methods, and social opportunities within fitness practices, while older demographics tend toward programs emphasizing health benefits, safety, personalized support, and tailored fitness experiences [17].

Overall, consumer behaviour in the fitness industry results from interconnected psychological, social, practical, and demographic factors, underscoring the importance of fitness stakeholders adopting targeted, personalized, and consumer-responsive marketing strategies and service designs to attract, motivate, and retain their clientele.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research approach to examine consumer motivation in the fitness industry. The quantitative method was selected to statistically evaluate various factors influencing individuals' fitness motivation and deliver clear, measurable outcomes based on collected data. Specifically, an online survey was developed and distributed electronically, providing easy access for participants and ensuring efficiency in data collection.

The study employed a convenience sampling approach, recruiting 390 participants through targeted social media campaigns on platforms widely used in Cyprus, including Facebook and Instagram. Eligibility criteria required respondents to be either active fitness centre members or individuals expressing strong interest in fitness activities. This digital recruitment strategy enabled efficient data collection across Cyprus's major urban centres while ensuring the representation of key demographic groups in the fitness market.

The sample size was determined through power analysis to achieve a 95% confidence level with $\pm 5\%$ margin of error, ensuring reliable statistical inferences about the Cypriot fitness consumer population. Data collection occurred over a focused four-week period [June-July 2024] to maintain temporal consistency and capture contemporary market insights. The online survey incorporated screening questions to verify participants' fitness engagement, with response patterns monitored to confirm balanced demographic representation. This methodology facilitated both the diversity needed for generalizable conclusions and the specificity required for meaningful analysis of fitness consumer behaviour.

The questionnaire was carefully developed through a systematic, multi-phase process to ensure it effectively captured the study's key objectives while maintaining scientific rigour. The initial phase involved an extensive review of existing literature on fitness motivation and consumer behaviour, drawing from validated measurement tools and theoretical frameworks. This foundational work helped identify core constructs to measure, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, social influences, and facility-related factors.

Following the literature review, the draft questionnaire underwent expert validation to assess its content validity and relevance. One academic specialist in sports management evaluated the instrument, providing feedback on question clarity, coverage of key dimensions, and potential biases. His input led to refinements in question-wording, structure, and response options to better align with the study's goals. A pilot test was then conducted with 5 fitness centre customers to evaluate the questionnaire's practicality, clarity, and reliability.

The final questionnaire incorporated a mix of question formats, including Likert scales for importance ratings, and multiple-choice questions for goal selection. The flow of questions was designed to progress logically from general motivations to specific facility-related factors, minimizing respondent fatigue. Attention checks and mandatory response fields were implemented in the digital survey platform to enhance data quality. This rigorous development process resulted in a robust research tool capable of capturing both universal and Cyprus-specific fitness motivations while adhering to methodological best practices.

The survey consisted of three structured sections designed to gain detailed information from respondents. The first section covers demographic characteristics. The second section examines the self-motivating factors influencing fitness engagement. The third section investigates the external factors influencing customer motivation, such as staff, service quality, wearables, cleanliness and hygiene, safety, atmosphere, equipment, membership price, location, promotional offers, social status, etc.

All collected data were analysed using SPSS 28.0, employing descriptive statistics to summarize participant characteristics and inferential statistics to examine relationships between key variables. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize respondents' characteristics, preferences, and motivational aspects, while inferential statistics tested correlations and significance among key variables, providing valuable insights to answer the study's aim clearly and systematically.

4. Results

The data originated from a survey conducted with 390 participants, providing valuable insights into consumer behaviour concerning the fitness industry in Cyprus. This comprehensive dataset allows for an in-depth analysis of how these strategies influence consumer decisions, preferences, and perceptions, offering a nuanced understanding of their effectiveness in the competitive fitness industry. The demographic profile of participants (Table 1) ensures a comprehensive representation across various age and gender groups.

Table 1. Demographic profile of survey participants

Age group	Male	Female	No. of participants	Male [%]	Female [%]
13 - 17	8	5	13	2.05%	1.28%
18 - 25	27	28	55	6.92%	7.18%
26 - 35	31	37	68	7.95%	9.49%
36 - 45	57	74	131	14.62%	18.97%
46 - 55	48	32	80	12.31%	8.21%
> 56	27	16	43	6.92%	4.10%
Total	198	192	390	50.77%	49.23%

Source: Developed by author

Such inclusivity is essential for multiple reasons. It enables the study to encompass diverse perspectives and experiences, which is critical for gaining a comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour and preferences within the examined industry. Including participants from various age groups allows research to investigate how the various elements and strategies influence different generations. This approach increases the findings' relevance and applicability to the wider population.

4.1. Self-motivating factors

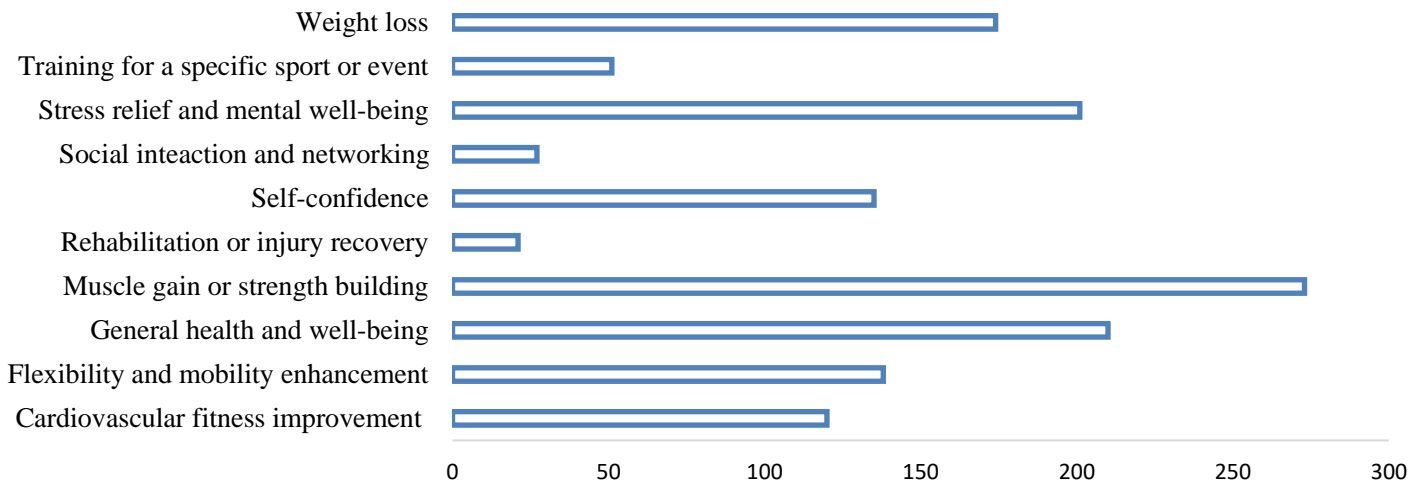
Motivation is a critical driver of consumer behaviour within the fitness industry, significantly shaping consumers' decisions regarding the selection of appropriate fitness centres or gyms, as well as their commitment to regular exercise routines and activities [18]. A comprehensive understanding of motivational factors is essential for gym owners and managers, allowing them to refine their services and effectively tailor offerings to align with individual needs and preferences [3]. This subsection explores the key motivational factors influencing individuals in their pursuit of fitness goals and examines their impact on fitness-related decisions, drawing upon primary research findings and insights gathered from this study.

To gain deeper insights into these motivational factors, we examine the responses obtained from specific survey questions. These questions were designed to uncover the multifaceted nature of participants' exercise motivations, highlighting

the intricate interplay between internal and external influences on their fitness behaviours.

The analysis of goals that people satisfy at a fitness centre provides valuable insights into consumer expectations, preferences, and motivational drivers, enabling fitness professionals and facility managers to design and offer tailored strategies that effectively meet client needs and foster sustained engagement (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Which goals do people satisfy at a fitness centre



Note: Participants were asked to select more than one option

The most frequently identified goal was muscle gain or strength building, selected by 273 respondents, indicating that building strength and muscle mass is a strong motivating factor among the surveyed population [1]. Following closely were general health and well-being (n=210) and stress relief and mental well-being (n=201), highlighting an increasing trend towards holistic and psychological wellness alongside physical improvements. Weight loss goals were also widely reported, with 174 respondents selecting this motivation, thus emphasizing body transformation as a key driver for many [19].

Other notably significant fitness motivators include flexibility and mobility enhancement (n=138), suggesting participants value exercises that improve functional capabilities and overall movement health. Self-confidence was highlighted by 135 respondents, reflecting personal growth and the psychological benefits gained from regular exercise routines [4]. Cardiovascular fitness improvement was indicated by 120 individuals, reinforcing the continued importance attributed to cardiorespiratory health and endurance.

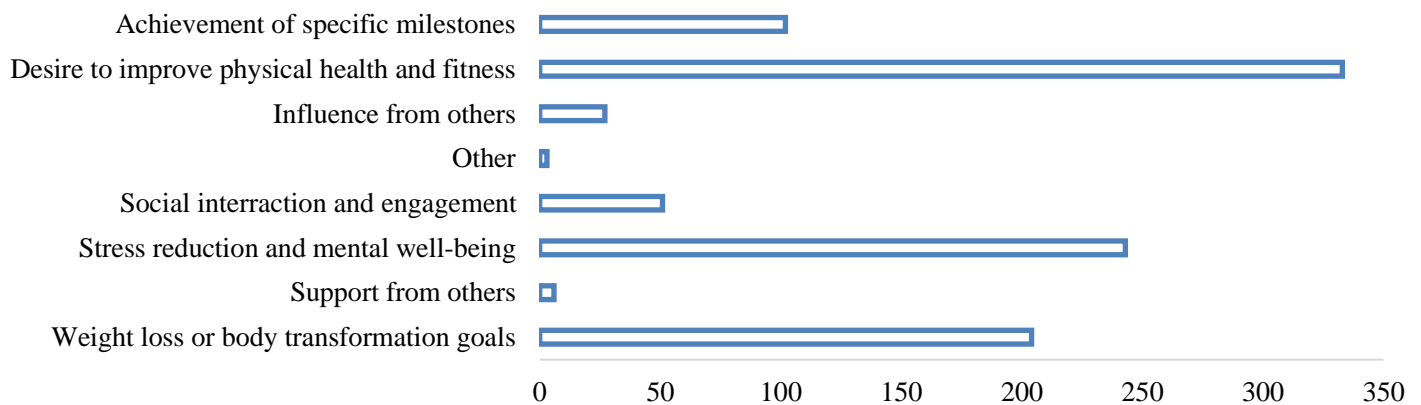
In contrast, motivations such as training for specific sports events (n=51), social interaction and networking (n=27), and rehabilitation or injury recovery (n=21) were less frequently identified as primary motivation factors. Nevertheless, their presence underscores that niche or specialized motivations also guide some consumers' fitness actions.

The results demonstrate a multifaceted motivational landscape among fitness consumers. They reveal that while traditional goals related to aesthetics and performance [such as strength, muscle development, and weight loss] remain

predominant, there is significant recognition and prioritization of broader and more balanced motivations, including mental health, emotional well-being, and general quality of life [20].

The analysis of participants' motivating factors to go to the fitness centre provides valuable insights into the evolving fitness landscape (Figure 2).

Figure 2. What motivates people to go to a fitness centre



Note: Participants were asked to select more than one option

The survey results demonstrate that individuals are primarily motivated to attend fitness centres by their desire to improve physical health and fitness, a factor chosen by the highest number of respondents ($n=333$). This underlines the central role that health and fitness improvements have in guiding people's decisions to engage in regular physical activity [3]. A substantial proportion of participants ($n=243$) also identified stress reduction and mental well-being as key motivators, highlighting the growing focus on mental health and emotional wellness within fitness motivations.

Additionally, weight loss or body transformation goals constitute a significant motivator, selected by 204 respondents. This suggests that aesthetic and appearance-oriented objectives are influential but rank behind broader health and mental wellness priorities [21]. Moreover, achieving specific milestones, challenges, or performance targets motivated 102 individuals, indicating that many consumers are goal-oriented and driven by measurable progress in their fitness journeys.

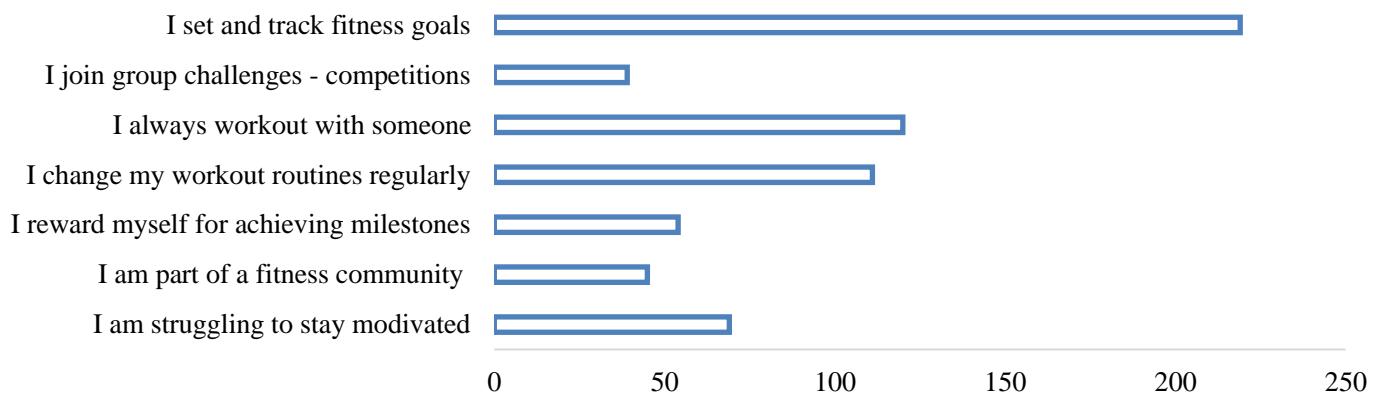
On the other hand, social interaction and engagement were indicated by a relatively smaller group ($n=51$), showing that social factors might enhance the fitness experience for some; however, these do not represent significant primary drivers across the broader population. Influences from others, such as friends, family, or fitness role models, were less frequently chosen, motivating only 27 respondents, while support from others was an even less significant motivator ($n=6$). Lastly, an extremely small proportion ($n=3$) reported motivation not captured by the pre-defined categories provided in the survey.

Overall, these findings reinforce that the dominant motivational drivers for attending fitness centres primarily relate to holistic personal health [physical, emotional, and mental], with social dynamics and external social factors playing relatively minor roles [22]. Such insights are valuable for fitness providers to

prioritize service offerings emphasizing comprehensive health benefits and well-being to effectively engage and retain their consumer base.

The next question illustrates the strategies and factors that consumers identify as important for maintaining their motivation and commitment to a consistent fitness routine (Figure 3).

Figure 3. How do consumers stay motivated to continue their fitness routine



Note: Participants were asked to select more than one option

The results offer valuable insight into the strategies consumers adopt to sustain their fitness motivation over time. Among respondents, the most popular method to remain motivated was "setting and tracking fitness goals," chosen by 219 participants. This indicates that clearly defined objectives and measurable progress significantly influence motivation levels, reflecting the goal-oriented nature of many fitness consumers [22].

The second most frequently highlighted strategy, selected by 120 participants, was "always working out with someone," emphasizing the vital role that companionship and accountability partnerships play in maintaining motivation. Regularly changing workout routines was also a prevalent method, indicated by 111 individuals, demonstrating that variety is a powerful factor in preventing monotony and promoting sustained engagement in fitness activities [1].

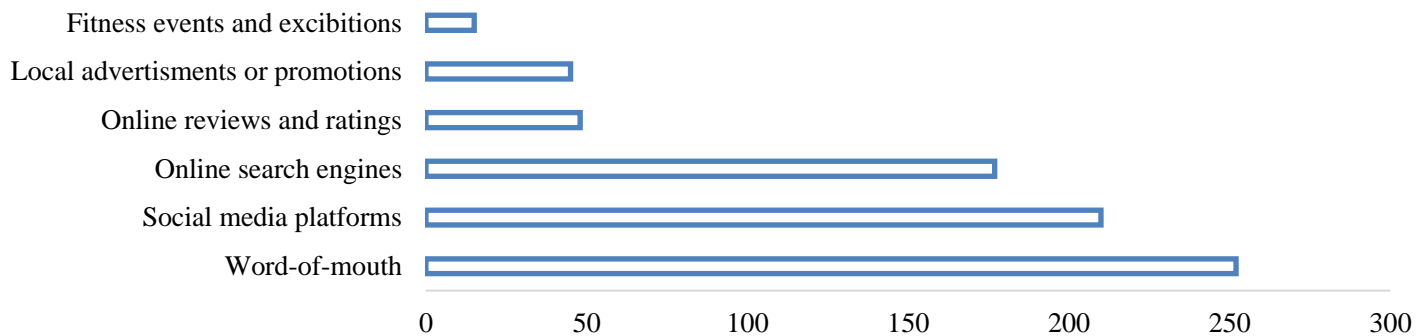
A notable segment of respondents (n=69) acknowledged they are currently struggling to maintain motivation, suggesting that staying consistently motivated remains challenging for a meaningful proportion despite efforts to adopt specific strategies. Smaller yet relevant groups reported rewarding themselves upon reaching fitness milestones (n=54) and actively participating in fitness community groups (n=45), which reflect additional helpful strategies related to external affirmation and social encouragement [21]. Participation in group challenges or competition events received relatively lower consideration, mentioned by only 39 respondents, signifying that competitiveness appeals to a more niche audience rather than a broad population.

Collectively, these results highlight a multi-strategy approach to sustaining fitness motivation. Most consumers rely on goal setting, accountability partnerships, and varied exercise routines [4]. Less frequently, external rewards, group interactions, and competitive activities may serve as supplementary motivational

drivers. Fitness providers and professionals can leverage these insights to design supportive environments, diverse fitness programs, and effective goal-tracking tools to better assist customers in overcoming motivational barriers.

The next figure illustrates respondents' preferred methods and channels for obtaining information about fitness centres before making their decision to join (Figure 4).

Figure 4. How do consumers find information about fitness centres before joining



Note: Participants were asked to select more than one option

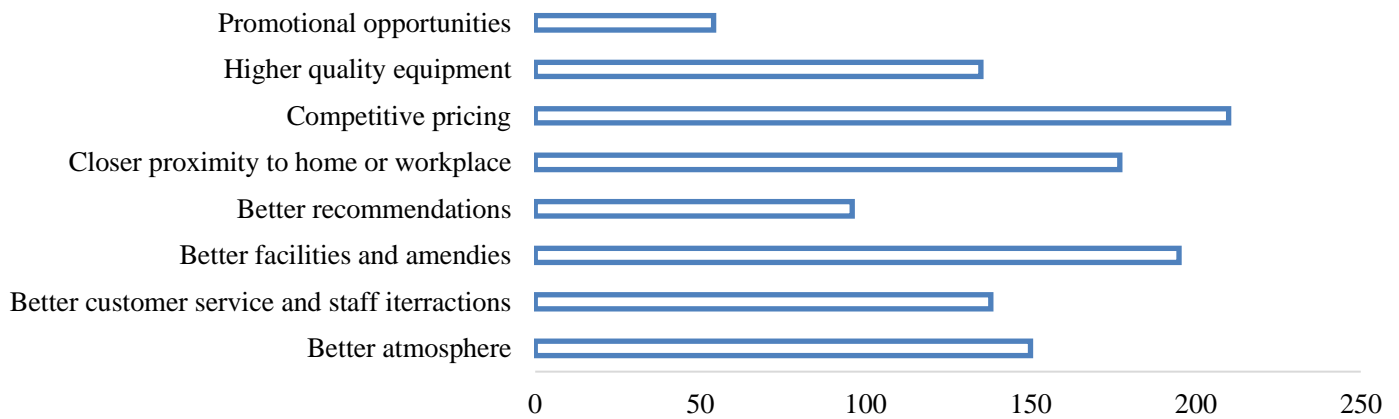
The results reveal that consumers largely rely on word-of-mouth recommendations [23] as the primary source of information when selecting a fitness centre, with 252 respondents identifying this method. This highlights the critical role personal recommendations and peer opinions play in influencing consumer decisions, signalling the value of strong customer relationships and positive client experiences [5]. Social media platforms also emerged as an influential information source, mentioned by 210 participants. This underscores the considerable impact that online social networks have in shaping perceptions, increasing fitness centre visibility, and attracting prospective members through engaging and interactive content.

Online search engines were cited by 177 respondents as their method of choice for gathering information about fitness centres, illustrating the importance of easily accessible online information, effective search engine optimization, and a clear, informative online presence to attract potential members. Other sources, such as online reviews and ratings (n=48) and local advertisements or promotions (n=45), were selected by fewer respondents, indicating they play a smaller, supportive role but still have significance for specific consumer segments [17]. Fitness events and exhibitions were the least frequently selected information source, mentioned by only 15 respondents, signifying minimal influence on broader consumer decision-making [12].

The findings indicate that personal recommendations, social media platforms, and online searches represent the most essential information channels for consumers considering fitness centres [23]. Fitness facilities should prioritize positive customer experiences, active social media engagement, and effective digital visibility to better capture consumer interest and facilitate informed decision-making among potential new members.

The next figure reveals the key factors identified by respondents that could prompt them to switch from their current fitness centre to an alternative facility (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Which factors may lead consumers to switch to a different fitness centre



Note: Participants were asked to select more than one option

The survey results highlight several important factors that may influence consumers' decision to switch to a different fitness centre. Competitive pricing emerged as the most frequently cited factor, with 210 respondents indicating that more attractive and affordable pricing can significantly influence their decision to change facilities [24]. This underscores the critical role pricing strategies play in consumer decision-making within the fitness sector. Facilities and available amenities were also strongly emphasized, cited by 195 participants, demonstrating the importance placed on comprehensive, high-quality services and amenities that enhance overall fitness experiences [11]. Furthermore, proximity and convenience were strongly influential, with 177 respondents suggesting that a fitness centre located closer to home, or their workplace might prompt them to switch memberships.

Additionally, 150 respondents stated that a better atmosphere in another facility could encourage them to leave their current fitness centre, highlighting that a positive, welcoming, and comfortable environment significantly contributes to customer satisfaction and retention [12]. Similarly, improved customer service and staff interactions were also a notable factor for 138 respondents, reflecting the high value placed on effective, friendly, and professional service experiences.

Higher-quality equipment was identified as a potential reason to switch by 135 respondents, emphasizing the ongoing importance of maintaining updated and reliable fitness machines and tools. Less influential [though still relevant] were better recommendations ($n=96$) and promotional opportunities ($n=54$), indicating that while promotions and referrals can influence consumer choices, they play supportive rather than primary roles [25]. Overall, these results indicate that fitness customers consider multiple factors when contemplating a switch, especially prioritizing competitive pricing, superior amenities, convenient location, and overall experience enhancement. Consequently, fitness operators should focus on delivering competitive value, ensuring high-quality facilities, developing strategic location

convenience, and offering outstanding customer service to retain members effectively.

4.2. External factors

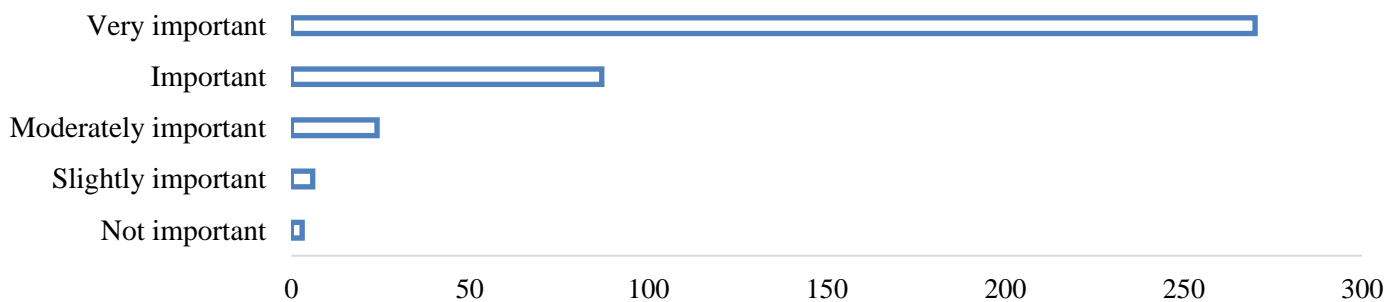
This section explores the external factors influencing consumer motivation and engagement within fitness centres. Unlike internal factors focused on individual goals and personal aspirations, external factors pertain to facility-related attributes and operational elements that significantly affect consumer decisions, satisfaction, and retention.

These factors include the quality and nature of interactions with gym staff, the variety, reliability, and modernity of fitness equipment, membership rates and pricing structures, and geographic convenience in terms of proximity and accessibility. Additionally, promotional offers, cleanliness, overall environment and comfort of facilities, safety considerations, and technological and digital innovations, such as wearable devices and virtual fitness platforms, collectively influence consumers' long-term fitness behaviours and engagement.

The next explores the external factors that strengthen motivation and encourage long-term commitment to fitness routines, revealing an additional dimension of complexity. Participants' responses highlight the significant impact of external support mechanisms and strategic approaches in maintaining sustained engagement and motivation in their fitness journeys.

The survey further explored the perceived importance of gym staff members in influencing and sustaining customer motivation (Figure 6).

Figure 6. How important are staff members in motivating customers



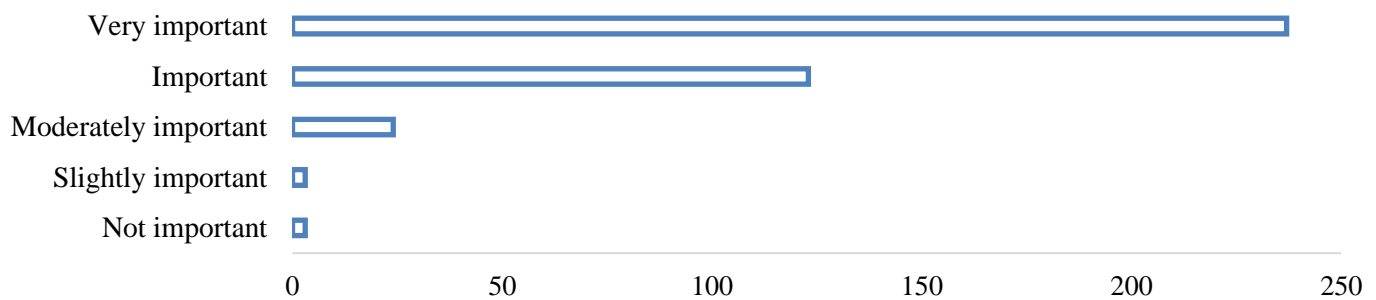
The results highlight the perceived significance of gym staff members in motivating fitness centre customers. An overwhelming majority of respondents (n=270) recognized gym staff as "very important" in influencing and enhancing their motivation levels. This demonstrates the critical role that trainers and other gym personnel play in fostering customer engagement, adherence, and overall satisfaction within fitness facilities [15]. In addition, 87 respondents rated gym staff as "important," further reinforcing the significant influence that professional support has on fitness engagement and motivation. When combined, responses indicating "very important" and "important" represent the vast majority of participants, underlining the necessity of well-trained, engaging, and supportive staff as an essential element of effective fitness facility management [26].

A smaller number of respondents viewed gym staff as "moderately important" (n=24) or "slightly important" (n=6), suggesting that while some individuals may derive motivation from alternative sources, gym staff presence still holds relevance. Only 3 respondents considered gym staff as "not important," emphasizing that almost all participants recognize some level of importance in staff motivation and involvement [25].

The findings strongly suggest that fitness staff members directly contribute to the motivational atmosphere within fitness centres, particularly through supportive relationships, professional guidance, encouragement, and personalized interaction. For fitness operators, investing in qualified, attentive staff and developing strong staff-to-customer relationships are therefore crucial for effectively engaging customers, enhancing client retention, and fostering long-term motivation and satisfaction.

The next figure illustrates participants' perceptions of the importance of service quality as a motivating factor for customers within fitness centres (Figure 7).

Figure 7. How important is service quality in motivating customers



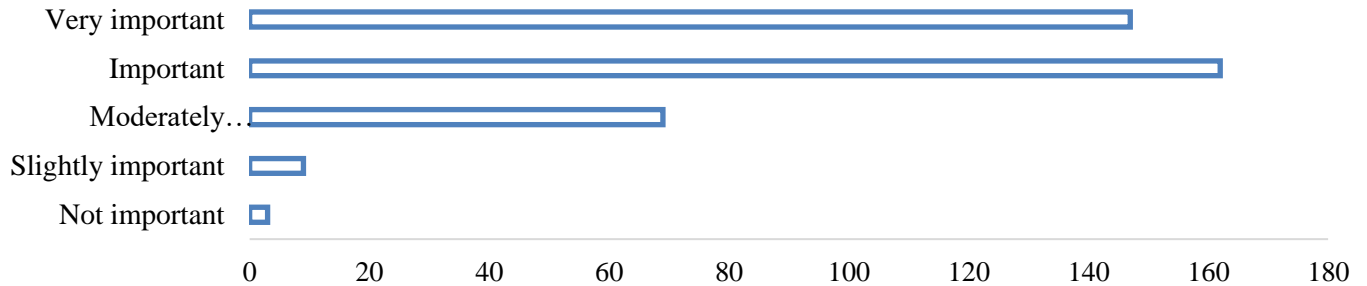
The results demonstrate that service quality is perceived as a critical factor in motivating fitness centre customers. A substantial majority of respondents (n=237) indicated that service quality is "very important," suggesting that excellent service strongly influences customer motivation, satisfaction, and continued engagement [15].

Additionally, 123 respondents rated service quality as "important," further reinforcing the significance of high-quality services as a decisive factor for a large segment of customers. In contrast, only a relatively small number of respondents considered service quality as "moderately important" (n=24). Moreover, very few participants viewed it as either "slightly important" or "not important," with each response receiving just 3 selections. The markedly low numbers in these categories underscore a clear consensus concerning the importance of good service in driving customers' fitness motivation [4].

The findings suggest that consumers strongly value service quality, including aspects like professional staff interactions, consistent and reliable customer support, personalized attention, and overall responsiveness. Therefore, fitness facilities aiming to significantly enhance user motivation, loyalty, and retention should emphasize delivering consistently high-quality services to effectively meet customer expectations.

The following figure illustrates respondents' perspectives on the importance of price as a motivating factor for customers attending fitness centres (Figure 8).

Figure 8. How important is the price in motivating customers

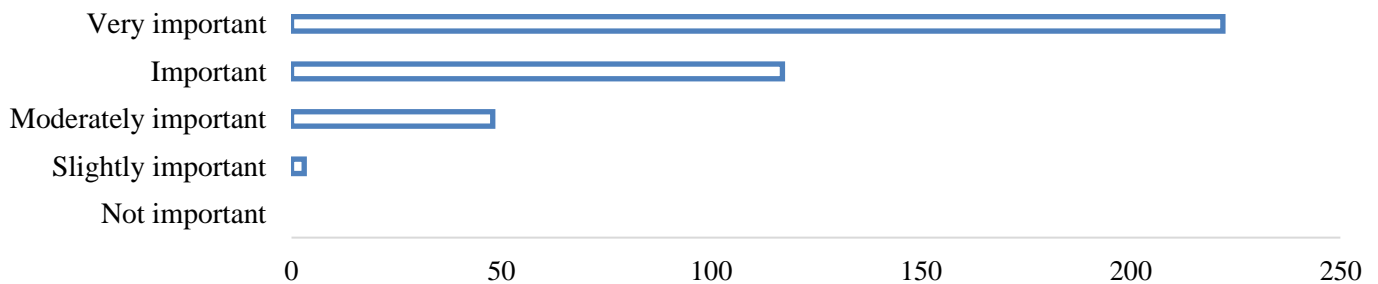


The results indicate that membership price significantly influences customers' motivation regarding fitness centre engagement. A considerable proportion of respondents (n=147) rated price as "very important," emphasizing the critical role affordability and perceived financial value play in encouraging fitness centre attendance and continued commitment. An even larger segment of participants (n=162) marked price as "important," further reinforcing the significant influence price has on customer motivation. This suggests that membership costs and flexible pricing strongly impact individuals' decisions when choosing and remaining committed to fitness facilities [27]. Additionally, 69 respondents viewed membership price as "moderately important," reflecting acknowledgement of its relevance, despite potentially prioritizing other motivational factors more strongly. Only a small number of respondents considered price as "slightly important" (n=9) or "not important" (n=3), indicating that very few participants found price to be of minimal influence on their fitness-related decisions [25].

The findings demonstrate the importance of pricing strategies in attracting, motivating, and retaining fitness centre customers. Fitness facilities should therefore ensure competitive pricing structures, transparent value perception, and flexible payment options to align effectively with customer expectations and enhance overall consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

The next figure presents respondents' views on the importance of location as a motivating factor influencing customer engagement (Figure 9).

Figure 9. How important is location in motivating customers



The survey results indicate that location is highly influential in motivating customers to engage with fitness centres. A significant majority of respondents

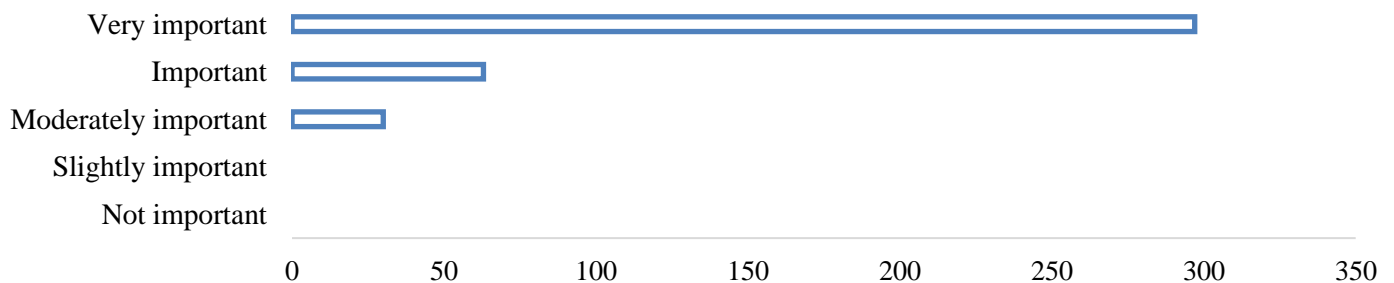
(n=222) identified the location as "very important," emphasizing that convenience and accessibility significantly shape their commitment and attendance decisions for fitness activities [27].

Additionally, another notable segment of respondents (n=117) considered location as "important." This further confirms that proximity and convenience considerably influence customers' ongoing motivation and their choice of fitness facility. A smaller group of respondents (n=48) indicated location as "moderately important," acknowledging that while the location has relevance, they might prioritize other motivational aspects such as quality, facilities, or atmosphere ahead of facility convenience [28]. Only a minimal proportion of respondents (n=3) viewed location as "slightly important," and notably, no respondents selected "not important." This suggests that virtually all respondents agree on the significant role proximity and accessibility have as motivational factors within the fitness context.

The results underscore the critical importance of convenience and facility location in customer motivation and retention strategies. Fitness facility operators should prioritize strategic site selection, consider easily accessible locations, and emphasize convenience-related aspects to effectively attract, satisfy, and retain their clientele.

The next figure presents participants' views concerning the importance of cleanliness and hygiene as factors in motivating customers (Figure 10).

Figure 10. How important is cleanliness and hygiene in motivating customers



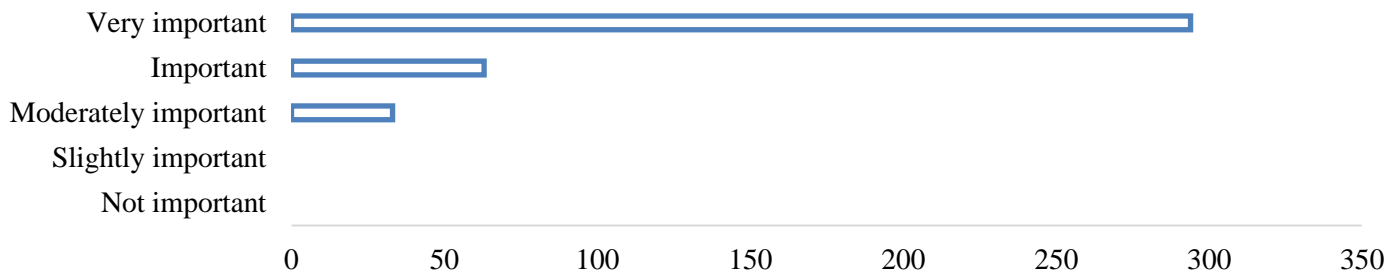
The results indicate that cleanliness and hygiene are critically important factors influencing customer motivation at fitness centres. A strong majority (n=297) rated cleanliness and hygiene as "very important," highlighting that a clean, hygienic environment is fundamental to attracting and retaining customers and ensuring their continued motivation and satisfaction [26]. Additionally, 63 respondents identified cleanliness and hygiene as "important," further reinforcing the significance of maintaining high sanitation standards within fitness facilities. A smaller group of 30 participants rated this factor as "moderately important," indicating that while hygiene considerations still matter to them, they might prioritize other aspects slightly more [28]. Remarkably, no respondents selected "slightly important" or "not important," emphasizing an almost unanimous consensus among participants about the critical role that cleanliness and hygiene play in their fitness experience.

The findings underscore a key priority for fitness facilities: establishing and maintaining consistently high standards of cleanliness and hygiene is essential. Fitness centre operators should thus prioritize rigorous sanitation practices,

cleanliness protocols, and proactive facility maintenance to effectively meet customer expectations and maintain their long-term motivation and engagement.

The next figure presents participants' views regarding the significance of safety as a motivational factor for customers (Figure 11).

Figure 11. How important is safety in motivating customers

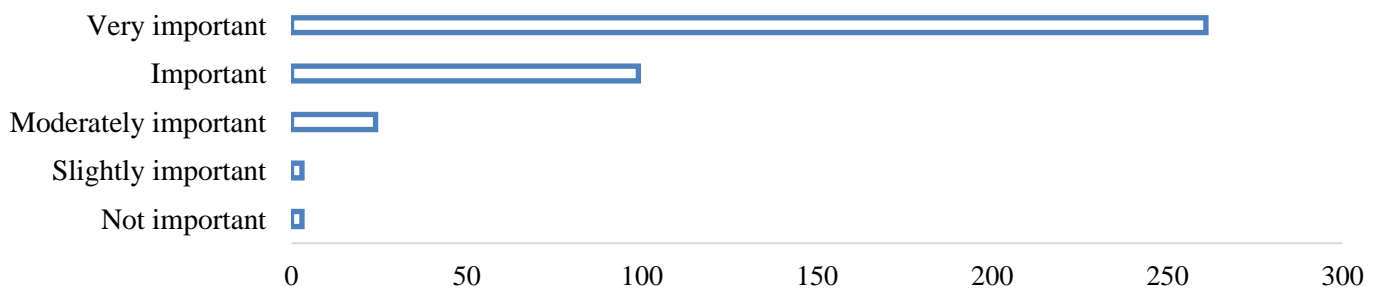


The survey results demonstrate that safety is seen as a key motivational factor among fitness centre customers. A significant majority of respondents (n=294) identified safety as "very important," emphasizing that ensuring a safe environment is fundamental for customers and plays an essential role in their motivation and continued attendance at gyms and fitness facilities [29]. In addition, another 63 respondents viewed safety as "important," further highlighting safety as a significant driver of satisfaction and comfort for gym members [27]. A smaller group of 33 respondents considered safety as "moderately important," suggesting they also acknowledge safety's relevance, even though they may prioritize other factors more highly. Notably, no respondents selected "slightly important" or "not important." This underscores a shared and widespread consensus regarding the crucial role safety plays within the fitness environment.

The findings confirm that safety measures [including well-maintained equipment, proper guidance, emergency preparedness, and general security] are central to customer motivation and loyalty. Fitness facility managers and operators must therefore prioritize safety standards and communicate clearly about their practices and protocols to effectively support customer engagement and long-term retention.

The following figure illustrates respondents' perceptions regarding the importance of the atmosphere as a motivating factor for customers (Figure 12).

Figure 12. How important is a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere in motivating customers



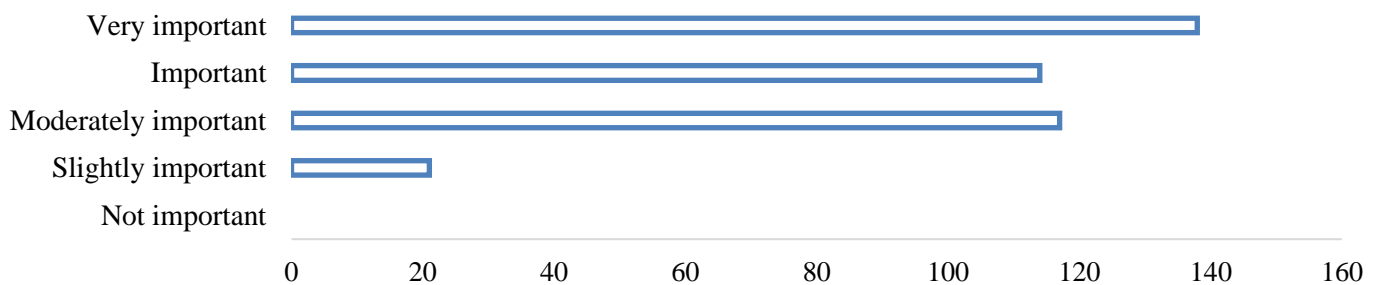
The responses highlight the significant role a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere plays in motivating fitness centre customers. A large majority of

respondents (n=261) rated a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere as "very important," suggesting that a welcoming, positive, and relaxing environment strongly contributes to customer satisfaction and ongoing facility attendance [30]. Additionally, 99 respondents considered atmosphere as "important," further reinforcing its considerable influence in shaping customers' fitness experiences. A smaller number (n=24) viewed atmosphere as "moderately important," indicating some acknowledgement of its value, albeit with slightly lower priority compared to other factors [27]. Only a minimal number of respondents selected "slightly important" (n=3) or "not important" (n=3), confirming that very few participants disregard atmosphere as a motivational factor.

The findings demonstrate that the atmosphere significantly affects consumers' motivation within fitness spaces. Fitness facility operators should therefore prioritize creating and maintaining a welcoming, comfortable, and relaxing environment, including attention to facility design, ambience, music, lighting, and overall comfort, to effectively attract and maintain customer loyalty.

The next figure highlights participants' perceptions about the importance of gym equipment as a motivating factor for customers (Figure 13).

Figure 13. How important is the equipment in motivating customers

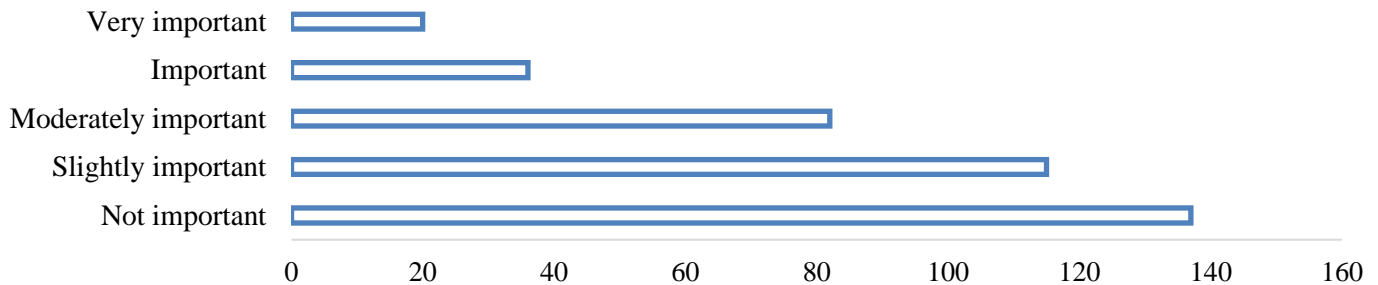


The results reveal that gym equipment plays a substantial role in customer motivation at fitness centres. The largest group of respondents (n=138) rated equipment as "very important," highlighting the critical role that high-quality, suitable, and well-maintained fitness equipment holds in motivating consumers as well as sustaining their overall satisfaction and engagement. A similarly significant number of participants (n=114) perceived gym equipment as "important," confirming that equipment quality and availability strongly influence their commitment to regular exercise [26]. Meanwhile, another sizeable group of respondents (n=117) considered equipment "moderately important," suggesting recognition of its significance, but possibly viewing other motivational elements as equally or more essential. Only a smaller segment of respondents marked equipment as "slightly important" (n=21), signalling a modest impact on their fitness motivation. Notably, no participants identified equipment as "not important."

The findings underscore the essential role of gym equipment within fitness centre experiences. Managers should prioritize investment in high-quality equipment, regular maintenance, and updating exercise machines and tools to meet customer expectations effectively and promote long-term membership commitment.

The next figure shows respondents' perceptions regarding the importance of social status as a motivational factor influencing customer engagement (Figure 14).

Figure 14. How important is social status in motivating customers

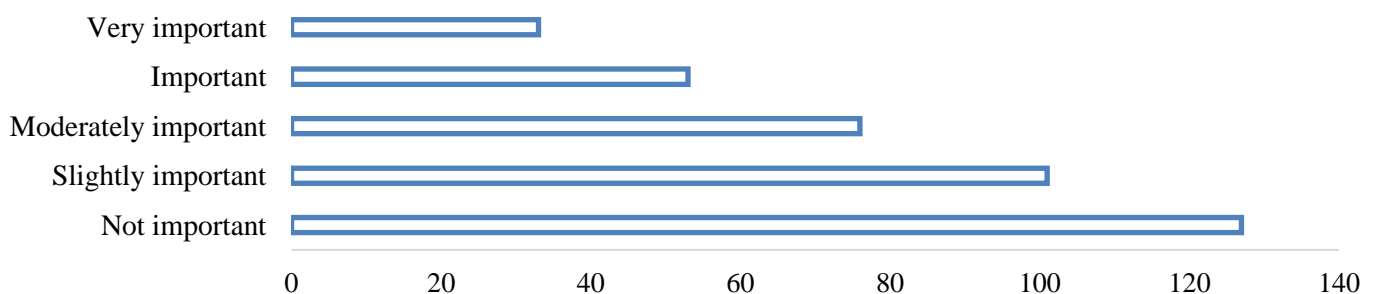


The findings reveal that social status is perceived as having a relatively limited impact on motivating customers within fitness centres. A substantial number of respondents ($n=137$) considered social status as "not important," indicating that for many participants, status and social image have little relevance or motivational influence regarding their fitness engagement. A similarly large group ($n=115$) rated social status as "slightly important," further highlighting its minor role in shaping fitness-related motivations [31]. Additionally, 82 respondents viewed it as "moderately important," suggesting some acknowledgement of its potential influence, though not as a primary motivational driver. However, smaller proportions of participants attributed higher significance to social status. Specifically, 36 respondents ranked social status as "important," while only 20 respondents indicated it was "very important." These findings show that, while a niche group of consumers is notably motivated by social recognition and social standing associated with fitness activities, this segment is relatively limited compared to other motivational factors [32].

The results show that social status has limited motivational importance for most consumers. Fitness facility operators and marketers should thus prioritize other key motivators like equipment quality, atmosphere, convenience, and affordability while acknowledging that targeting social status is a motivational element.

The next figure illustrates respondents' perceptions regarding the importance of promotional offers as a motivational factor (Figure 15).

Figure 15. How important are promotional offers in motivating customers



The responses regarding promotional offers indicate varied views about their importance as motivational tools for customer engagement at fitness centres. The

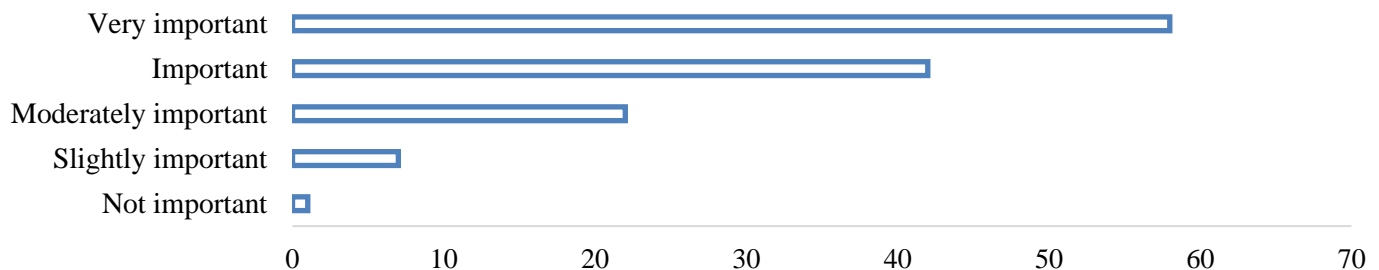
highest number of respondents (n=127) indicated promotional offers as "not important," suggesting a meaningful proportion of customers do not feel motivated by promotions or discounted deals when deciding on fitness engagement [4].

Additionally, a relatively large group (n=101) identified promotional offers as "slightly important," implying limited motivational influence. Another segment of participants (n=76) labelled promotional offers as "moderately important," suggesting they recognize some motivation benefits, although not particularly strong or decisive. On the other hand, smaller but still noteworthy numbers of respondents assigned higher value to promotional offers. Specifically, 53 participants rated promotions as "important," while 33 respondents classified them as "very important." This indicates that targeted offers and discounts do serve as meaningful motivational incentives for some customers, albeit in fewer cases overall [33].

Collectively, these results reveal that promotional offers have a limited and somewhat segmented impact on consumers within the fitness industry. While the majority of participants assign relatively low importance to promotions in shaping their motivation, promotions still represent valuable strategies for attracting and motivating specific customer groups. Fitness centres could therefore strategically use promotional offers and incentives targeted toward particular populations or introductory markets, rather than relying exclusively on these strategies for widespread client motivation and retention.

The next figure presents respondents' opinions regarding the importance of music as a motivational factor (Figure 16).

Figure 16. How important is music in motivating customers



The results indicate that music holds considerable importance in motivating fitness centre customers, although its significance is somewhat varied among participants. The highest proportion of respondents (n=58) categorized music as "very important," demonstrating that selecting suitable music is impactful in creating an energetic, motivating workout atmosphere that enhances customers' overall fitness experience [34]. An additional 42 respondents described music as "important," suggesting it plays a meaningful role in their motivation and enjoyment during fitness activities [35].

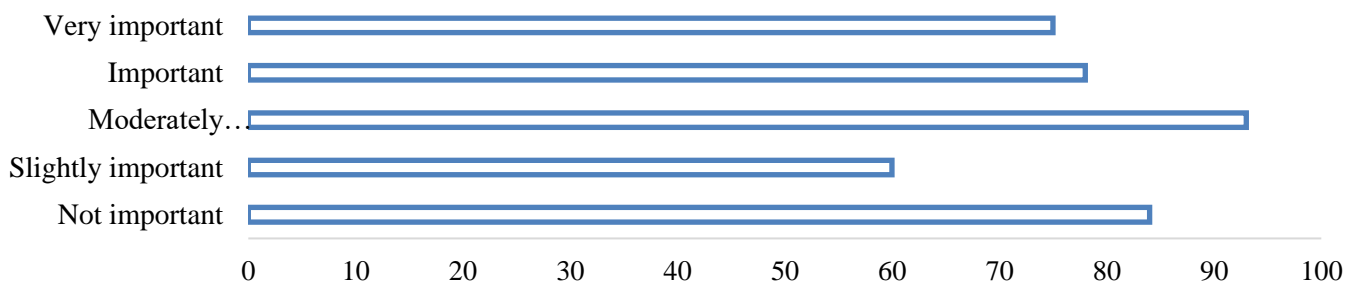
Meanwhile, a smaller group of participants (n=22) rated it as "moderately important," signifying acknowledgement of music's value, though their motivation could be even more influenced by other factors. Only a small number of respondents (n=7) viewed music as "slightly important," and just one participant selected "not important." These lower numbers indicate only minimal disregard for music as a

motivational element, showing that almost all respondents recognize at least some motivational impact from music.

The results highlight music as an influential, yet secondary motivator compared to other facility elements, such as equipment and atmosphere. Fitness centres can leverage these insights to strategically incorporate suitable music choices into workout spaces, contributing positively to client motivation, mood enhancement, and overall customer satisfaction.

The following figure illustrates participants' perceptions regarding the significance of wearable technology as a factor in motivating consumers (Figure 17).

Figure 17. How important is wearable fitness technology in motivating customers



The results regarding the importance of wearable fitness technology in motivating customers reflect diverse perspectives among participants. A moderate proportion of respondents (n=93) consider wearable technology as "moderately important," indicating that while they recognize its potential to support their motivational efforts [16], it is not necessarily an essential factor in their fitness journey.

The second-most frequent response was "not important," selected by 84 participants. This suggests that a significant number of consumers do not view wearable devices as relevant or influential to their motivation. On the other hand, several respondents attributed higher significance to wearable fitness technology: 78 participants identified it as "important," and 75 viewed it as "very important," highlighting that wearable technology serves as a valuable motivational tool for a substantial segment of the fitness market [36].

Fewer participants (n=60) marked wearable technology as "slightly important," further adding to the mixed views among consumers. These varied responses indicate no overwhelming consensus concerning wearable technology's motivational role, reflecting distinct personal preferences, engagement preferences, and technological adoption patterns.

The findings suggest that wearable fitness technology may offer meaningful benefits to many fitness participants, but its motivational significance varies considerably across the surveyed population. Wearable fitness technology provides individuals with interactive, data-driven exercise experiences, allowing them to track goals and progress in real time [37]. The integration of technology and personal motivation offers considerable opportunities for innovation. Fitness centres effectively utilizing wearable fitness devices can offer enhanced, personalized services to boost member engagement and motivation.

5. Discussion

The data collected from a survey of 390 participants provides comprehensive insights into consumer behaviour within the fitness industry in Cyprus. The diverse demographic profile of respondents ensures a broad representation spanning various age groups and gender categories, yielding valuable findings with meaningful implications for the local fitness market. Specifically, individuals aged 36–45 represented the largest age group (n=131; 33.6%), suggesting significant participation and interest from mid-aged adults. Nearly equal representation of male (50.77%) and female participants (49.23%) also contributes to an inclusive dataset, enabling robust generalization of results across the wider Cypriot population.

The analysis revealed diverse motivating factors that influence consumer choices for fitness engagement [3], [18], [21]. Significantly, muscle gain or strength building emerged as the most frequently stated goal (n=273), reflecting a prevailing interest in aesthetic outcomes, physical enhancement, and performance-oriented improvements [1]. This was closely followed by motivations related to general health and well-being (n=210), and stress relief and mental well-being (n=201). These findings illustrate a balanced consumer perspective, linking traditional fitness motivations, such as muscle gain and physical health, with increasingly prominent considerations for mental well-being and stress management [11], [18].

Moreover, weight loss or body transformation goals remained a significant motivational factor (n=174); such results suggest continued consumer prioritization of aesthetic or personal appearance goals within fitness pathways. Additional pertinent motivators like flexibility improvement (n=138), enhanced self-confidence (n=135), and cardiovascular fitness (n=120) underscore the nuanced aspects of individual goals [1], [17]. Less prevalent responses, such as training for specific events (n=51), social interaction (n=27), and rehabilitation (n=21), reflected more specialized or niche consumer segments.

Respondents' reasons for attending fitness centres highlighted multifaceted motives, emphasizing health, wellness, goal attainment, and self-improvement. Improving overall physical health was paramount (n=333) and closely tied to stress reduction and mental wellness (n=243). The prominence of mental health considerations demonstrates growing consumer awareness about holistic wellness that consumers are pursuing more than physical outcomes [18], [19], [35].

The strategies consumers adopt to stay motivated offer insights into long-term engagement practices. Goal setting and progress tracking were critically important (n=219), reinforcing the value consumers place upon structured, measurable fitness objectives [25], [27]. Social accountability, represented by working out with others (n=120), and variety in workouts (n=111) were also major factors, supporting the importance of social connections and novel experiences in sustaining fitness motivation. Interestingly, a significant minority (n=69) expressed struggling with motivation, indicating ongoing challenges and opportunities for fitness centres to provide enhanced motivational frameworks, support, and interventions [32], [33].

The process through which consumers discover information about fitness centres showed the marked influence of personal experiences and digital interactions. Word-of-mouth was the most widely cited channel (n=252), underscoring the power of

personal referrals and positive consumer experiences [23]. Social media platforms (n=210) and online searches (n=177) also ranked highly, illustrating the importance of digital presence, engagement, and reputation-building online. Other communication channels such as reviews, local promotions, and fitness events had lower, yet still relevant, effectiveness, indicating a secondary but useful role in prompting fitness centre choice among specific demographics [3], [15], [17].

Factors prompting participants to consider switching fitness centres demonstrated notable priorities in their decision-making process. Competitive pricing had the broadest impact (n=210), indicating strong sensitivity to financial considerations [4], [22], [25]. Accessible facilities and amenities (n=195) and convenient location (n=177) were other influential elements, confirming that both pricing and convenience significantly influence customer retention in the competitive fitness market [29]. Additionally, a better atmosphere (n=150), enhanced customer service (n=138), and improved equipment quality (n=135) were prevalent reasons to switch, demonstrating that comprehensive and high-quality experiences substantially influence customer loyalty and retention [25], [27], [33].

External factors emerged as influential context variables affecting consumer motivations. Staff interactions were particularly crucial (n=270 ranking as very important), emphasizing the key role gym personnel play in customer satisfaction and sustained motivation. Equally decisive was service quality, with a clear majority (n=237) rating it as "very important," underscoring that customers strongly value attentive, personalized, and professional service in their fitness experiences [15], [26].

Cleanliness and hygiene received exceptional emphasis, as nearly all participants identified these factors as either very (n=297) or important (n=63). Similarly, safety was overwhelmingly prioritized (n=294 very important), indicating consumers' high expectations for secure and clean environments as fundamental necessities [5], [16]. Meanwhile, atmosphere (n=261 very important) and gym equipment (n=138 very important) were significant motivations, implying that comfortable and well-equipped facilities attract and retain customers effectively [25].

Comparatively, music (n=58 very important), promotional offers (n=33 very important), and social status (n=20 very important) were critical to smaller consumer segments, suggesting more nuanced roles in consumer motivation [34], [35]. Concerning price (n=147 very important) and location (n=222 very important), the results highlight flexible, affordable pricing structures and convenient accessibility as fundamental considerations for facility choice and loyalty [29].

Cypriot fitness consumers exhibit a diverse spectrum of motivating factors. Comprehensive fitness experiences are highly valued, with strong emphasis placed on intrinsic motivators, goal-oriented activities, facility quality, and convenience-related factors. Fitness establishments and professionals can leverage these insights by designing strategic combinations of customer-focused services, optimal facility conditions, advantageous pricing models, digital presence, and supportive, engaging environments to effectively satisfy customer expectations, foster sustained motivation, and enhance long-term loyalty within the fitness industry.

6. Conclusions

This study aimed to identify, explore, and critically analyse the key factors motivating consumer behaviour within the fitness industry in Cyprus. Findings drawn from a survey of 390 participants highlight the diverse and complex nature of fitness-related motivations among Cypriot consumers. First, consumers prioritize holistic health, balancing physical goals like muscle gain and weight loss with mental well-being, reflecting a broader shift toward integrated wellness. This duality underscores the need for fitness centres to offer programs that cater to both body and mind, such as strength training combined with stress-relief activities. Second, facility quality, particularly staff expertise, cleanliness, and safety, emerges as a decisive factor for retention, while competitive pricing and location dominate switching decisions. These findings highlight the importance of investing in trained personnel, hygiene protocols, and strategic pricing to foster loyalty. Third, niche motivators like social status and promotions play limited roles, suggesting that broad marketing strategies should prioritize core consumer needs over peripheral incentives.

Remarkably, the emphasis consumers place on comprehensive health and wellness motivations underscores an evolving approach toward fitness engagements, illustrating awareness and appreciation of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational elements. The empirical insights from this research contribute to a deeper understanding of consumer behaviours and offer meaningful evidence specific to the Cypriot fitness market. Furthermore, these results enrich global literature related to fitness motivation, emphasizing the interplay between diverse motivational categories and their effect on sustained engagement. Overall, the findings presented a significantly advanced comprehension of fitness industry consumers within Cyprus, supporting stakeholders in effectively addressing consumer needs, encouraging more active lifestyle participation, and fostering enhanced health outcomes within the community.

6.1. Practical implications

The findings of this study yield important practical implications beneficial to various stakeholders within the fitness industry in Cyprus, including fitness centre operators, facility managers, trainers, marketers, and policymakers. Firstly, fitness operators must prioritize the holistic consumer experience by creating environments and services that significantly align with consumer motivations identified by the research. Given that traditional physical motivations, such as muscle gain, weight loss, and cardiovascular fitness, remain predominant among Cypriot fitness consumers, operators should continue delivering fitness programs and facilities tailored to these fitness outcomes. Incorporating various types of well-maintained, modern equipment, personalized training sessions, and diversified class options can effectively meet the identified consumer needs, offering individualized pathways for achieving physical wellness goals.

Additionally, the study highlighted a growing consumer emphasis on mental health and holistic well-being, extending beyond purely physical motivations. Fitness operators can address these changing consumer expectations by promoting

programs that include stress relief, relaxation, mindfulness practices, and mental wellness components such as yoga, pilates, meditation classes, and wellness workshops. Implementing events and educational activities focused on mental well-being can also create a balanced service portfolio, accommodating this expanding area of consumer interest and thereby enhancing consumer satisfaction and retention.

Service quality and effective staff-customer interactions appeared as central motivating factors, indicating that ongoing training programs emphasizing customer support service, motivational coaching, and professional interaction skills should be standard practice within fitness facilities. Recruiting, training, and retaining high-quality, well-equipped staff members who understand consumer needs and preferences will significantly shape customer experiences, fostering loyalty and reducing the likelihood of membership cancellations.

Given that location, affordability, and accessibility were identified among influential fitness facility attributes, practical strategies must consider these aspects centrally in operational and marketing decisions. Fitness centres should examine strategies for competitive pricing, flexible membership packages, transparent pricing structures, and convenient payment options to attract price-sensitive customers. Moreover, establishing fitness centres strategically within proximity to residential or commercial areas will enhance convenience and positively contribute to member retention.

Since consumers employ a combination of sources when searching for fitness centres, particularly word-of-mouth recommendations, social media platforms, and online search engines, facility operators and fitness marketers must build positive, strong digital reputations. Investing in targeted social media outreach, user-generated content, community engagement initiatives, and relationship marketing will optimize consumer perceptions and noticeably increase facility attractiveness. Managers can also implement referral programs that encourage satisfied customers to attract new clients through personal recommendations, leveraging the effectiveness of word-of-mouth promotion.

Finally, the emphasis participants placed on hygiene, cleanliness, and safety conditions underscores facility maintenance and sanitation standards as non-negotiable priorities for fitness operators. To ensure satisfaction, operators should consistently communicate and demonstrate effective sanitation practices, facility care, and comprehensive safety protocols. Maintaining transparent hygiene and safety standards directly contributes to high consumer trust, confidence, and long-term relationships critical to operational success within Cyprus's competitive fitness landscape.

6.2. Limitations of the study

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the use of a convenience sampling method to collect the online survey data might have resulted in certain populations being underrepresented, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results to the broader Cypriot population. Secondly, relying only on quantitative survey data restricts the depth of insights into respondents' subjective motivations; qualitative research methods, such

as interviews or focus groups, might have provided a richer context and deeper understanding of individual fitness motivations. Furthermore, as data were collected within a specific and bounded period (June to July 2024), the study outcomes might reflect seasonal or temporal factors not representative of year-round behaviours.

Additionally, the self-reported nature of the survey might have introduced response biases, including respondents' tendencies to provide socially desirable answers rather than honest reflections. Lastly, this research was restricted to examining motivational factors within Cyprus, contributing relevant local insights but potentially limiting applicability to international markets or contexts. Therefore, future studies should consider broader sampling frames, integrate mixed methodologies combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, and explore motivational dynamics across extended periods and diverse geographic contexts for more comprehensive, generalizable findings.

6.3. Recommendations for future research

Future research could address several areas to further extend and enrich current insights into fitness consumer motivation. Firstly, subsequent studies should employ mixed-method approaches, combining qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, or case studies with quantitative survey instruments. This integrated methodological approach would generate a deeper understanding of underlying motivations within broad populations, facilitating a richer interpretation of motivational complexities beyond purely statistical analysis. Furthermore, there is value in exploring longitudinal research designs to examine motivational dynamics over time, providing clarity on how consumer motivations evolve, especially in response to societal trends, technological advancements, seasonal effects, or shifts in community health awareness.

Additionally, future investigations could adopt larger, representative sampling techniques covering diverse geographic locations across Cyprus and potentially comparative studies involving multiple countries or cultural contexts; this would enhance the generalizability and applicability of the findings, particularly within a global fitness perspective. Researchers should also investigate specific demographic segments, such as various age, socioeconomic, or lifestyle groups, to understand more precise motivational differences and tailor industry strategies accordingly. Lastly, examining the effectiveness of specific marketing approaches, digital fitness innovations, wearable technologies, and varied client retention strategies through experimental or intervention-based designs would provide actionable insights beneficial to industry stakeholders.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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