

## 157 - THE STUDY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AS AN EXPLANATORY VARIABLE FOR LOYALTY TO THE PRACTICE OF FITNESS IN LISBON

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### INTRODUCTION

The physical activity is increasingly present in people's lives, taking as a mobilizing factor in the present. Although this phenomena increasingly attracting the general population, there appears a group of people more likely to have greater loyalty to the practice. (OLIVEIRA, 2008 and KOTLER, 2000). Using data provided by Marktest (2004), it is estimated that more than 1.3 million Portuguese attend academies. Most of these visitors are women and young people living in Greater Lisbon and Porto, belonging to upper middle and upper classes, with training and tertiary education.

This research aims to identify the demographic profile of eight gyms exclusively for women in Lisbon, and to identify the aspects that most influence the value and loyalty to the sports consumer. We believe that knowing the characteristics and motivations of the practitioners in making the purchase and continuity of service is of significant importance to the increase in consumer loyalty at gyms. And, given the large investment in the sports market, by elements of the feminine gender, we believe this is a market area that deserves consideration and further progress in studies to help range of information on this group.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### The fitness of consumers in Gyms

Women account for much of the current consumption and influence the purchases largely male. Are more sensitive to advertising than men and more permeable to promotions (OLIVEIRA, 2008). Women are increasingly close to the hedonic consumption in order to realize more and more by buying a pleasure (and ESTEBAN RIVAS, 2004). While men see mostly purchases with the functional value (Myers, WEIGEL and HOLLIDAY, 1989). Just as there are different reasons men and women to start exercise programs. For women, the most important is weight control, while for men it's the fun (LOWLES and DAVIES, 1991).

The IHRSA (2005) mentions a number of possible reasons for women choosing gyms exclusively for females. Some may be seeking recovery of health factors, or need a safe environment in which to gain the confidence and physical form. Already Markest (2004) points out that in Portugal, the academies of small, exclusively female practitioners are part of the national scene, having networks with more than 100 institutions across the country. There is thus the great importance of research to evaluate the demographic profile of these women, and other information that may raise greater loyalty in the academies, and understand their consequences for future behavior of consumers buying these.

#### Consumer loyalty in Gyms

Consumers nowadays are no longer functional and have different attitudes towards consumption. Increasingly the number of repeat purchases, interact with the larger number of people, contributing to the increase in their attitude and product selectivity (ALEXANDER and MELIGDIS, 2006). Given the postmodern perspective, customer loyalty has three components: attitudinal, behavioral and bipolar (HEER & DICKSON, 2008). Rowley and Dawes is the (2000) customer loyalty should be considered as a combination of attitude and behavior.

Vilares and Coelho (2005), an important contribution in the field, defined the concepts of loyalty and fidelity by noting that, although they are associated, have different meanings. For them, loyalty is the customer's intention to buy again, and the retention or loyalty, is the continuity of purchase behavior. The loyalty has a tendency to take on three dimensions: (a) affective loyalty, which involves human interaction, as manifested in statements like "I feel identified with Company X" or "I am a friend of many employees of Company X"; (b) loyalties rational or cognitive, which involves assessments of the commercial relationship, including assessments on prices, the amount received or costs, or (c) behavioral loyalty, which results from the two previous dimensions and corresponds to the client and intend to continue recommend the company to others. (Vilares and Coelho, 2005). However, there may Mahony, Madrigal and Howard (2000), maintain the loyalty of two dimensions - attitudes, described as psychological tendencies compared to the evaluation of a particular object or entity, in this case a team or sport, and effective behaviors, ie the act of repeating what had been done.

According to Oliver (2007), loyalty is a difficult area of analysis and has as main objectives to increase retention and motivation. In his research with people aged 16 to 24 years in academia, he noted that 48% of young people have a fair range on average from 1 year and older age groups have more time for loyalty. And Dawes and Rowley (2000) concluded that the main causes of lack of loyalty in the younger ages in health and fitness clubs are factors such as the University entrance, early employment and change of residence. Already, Funk and Pastore (2000) Found That the main role is the continued loyalty of customers and Reducing the costs to Attract new customers to the company.

### RESEARCH METHOD

#### Sample

The study population consisted of eight practitioners chosen feminine fitness centers in various locations of Lisbon. 486 questionnaires were administered, and the questionnaires with a minimum of three months of practice were excluded, leaving 402. The age of the inquired ranged from 16 to 69 years. The measurement of loyalty implied the consideration of previous experience in the gyms of the second survey questionnaire Vilares and Coelho (2005). Data collected from October to December 2009.

### OBJECTIVES

Making the sociodemographics of practitioners in fitness gyms exclusively for visible women in Lisbon.  
 Check the extent to which sociodemographic factors influencing consumer loyalty Sports Fitness for Women in Lisbon.

### Hypothesis

We seek to test if: H1-There are significant differences in the fairness of practitioners of Fitness, according to their sociodemographic characteristics;

### Data Processing

The data were processed using the version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0 for Windows). To meet the first objective of the study were created frequency distribution tables (absolute and relative) of the members of sociodemographic variables. Next, we performed regression analysis of factors for loyalty, and the correlation of items with both variables. Tests were used One-Way ANOVA to compare means of the fairness of practitioners, according to the qualifications, geographical proximity of residence / work and practice time. Finally, the internal consistency was assessed by Cronbach's alpha test and in tests of statistical inference the level of significance was maintained at 5%. We used a numerical scale from 1 to 10, to assess loyalty.

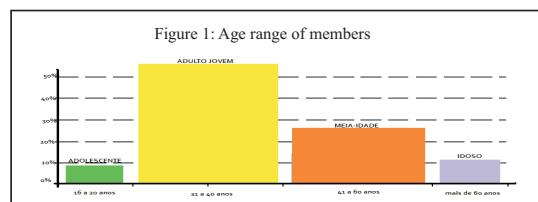
## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

### Study Description: sociodemographics

#### a) Characterization age and length of practice

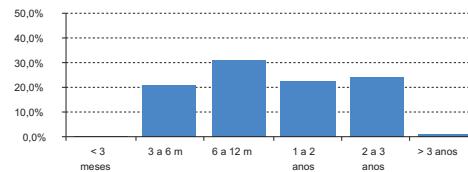
To make possible the comparison between groups, we divided inquired into age groups. Thus, the sample was divided into four age groups, which were: "Teen" (between 14 and 20 years), "Young Adult" (between 21 and 40), "Middle Age" (between 41 and 60) and, finally, "Elderly" (with more than 60 years) (Serranito, 2001, p.132). For the sample distribution by age groups, the data show that more than half of the sample belongs to age group "young adult" (52.8%). Here are the groups "Middle Age" (28.5%) to which nearly a third of the sample and the other groups with less representation "Teenager" (8.2%) and 'Old' (10.5%).

Lendrevie (2004) points to act as a key targeting Criteria and influence therefore to characterize and consumer purchasing.



Regarding the practice time in the Gym, Figure 2 summarizes the information provided by the sample in each of the items comprising the questionnaire. Noted That most of the sample HAD 6 to 12 months of practice, with values Exceeding 30%.

Figure 2: driving time in the Gym



#### b) Distance of residence and work in relation to the gym

On the distance of the residence of members to the gym, the data show that more than half of the sample belongs to the region close to the gym while the 0-5 km away, and the group with greater distance from the residence to the gym corresponds to 12.2% a 100%.

Table 1: Distance of residence to the gym

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1 0-5 Km	277	68,9	68,9	68,9
2 6-10 km	31	7,7	7,7	76,6
3 10-15 km	45	11,2	11,2	87,8
4 > 15 Km	49	12,2	12,2	100,0
X Total	402	100,0	100,0	

We found more than half the work near the gym (50.5%). Since this date Is That most of the members lives and works near the gym at a distance of 0-5 km away.

Quadro 2: Distância do trabalho a academia

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1 0-5 Km	203	50,5	50,5	50,5
2 6-10 km	45	11,2	11,2	61,7
3 10-15 km	77	19,2	19,2	80,8
4 > 15 Km	77	19,2	19,2	100,0
X Total	402	100,0	100,0	

#### d) Presence of relatives and friends at the gym

Regarding the presence of relatives in the gym, Table 3 summarizes the information provided by the sample in each of the items that form the questionnaire. Noted That the Majority of Our sample (377 inquired) Has Stated That That Have states one or more family members at the gym.

Table 3: Family in the gym

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1 Non-member	85	21,1	21,1	21,1
2 Member	317	78,9	78,9	100,0
X Total	402	100,0	100,0	

According to the sample, 295 respondents (73.4%) portray That Do Not Have friends in the gym members and friends Have Indicated That 107 members, Representing 26.6% of the sample.

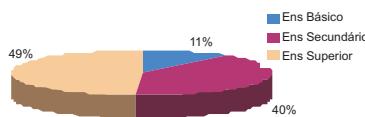
Table 4: Gym, belonging to Friends

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Non-member	295	73,4	73,4	73,4
Member	107	26,6	26,6	100,0
Total	402	100,0	100,0	

### g) Qualifications and earnings of practitioners

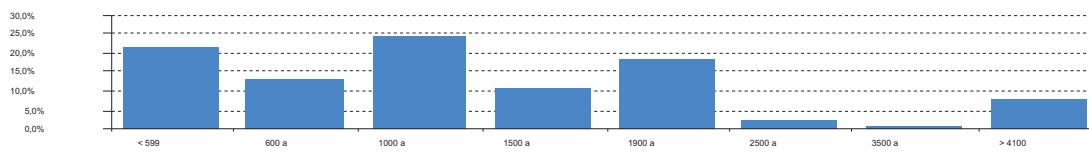
With regard to qualifications, most of the sample is licensed (49%), while 40% finished secondary school and 11% have only elementary education.

Figure 9: Characterization of the partners Literary



Regarding the monthly income of the household, one quarter of the sample has an income between € 1,000 and € 1,499. Households with higher incomes are the least represented, with: between € 2,500 and € 3,449 (4.5%), between 3,500 € and 4,100 € (2.5%) and over € 4100 just 8%.

Figure 10: Monthly income of the household



Considering the characterization carried out, we can proceed with a demographic profile citing that the vast majority of members inquired belong to the age group between 21 and 40 years, household monthly income between € 1,000 and € 1,499, and have a residence next to the gym.

### Comparative Study

Through a comparative study tried to verify the central hypothesis of the study, investigating whether there are significant differences in the loyalty of fitness practitioners, agree: a) the variation in qualifications, b) geographical proximity and c) practice time.

According to the qualifications, we find that the difference in the values of loyalty is statistically significant,  $F(3, 393) = 7.649$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , and the subjects with basic education obtain higher levels of loyalty.

Table 6: Educational attainment and loyalty (Tukey test)

Qualifications	Subset for alpha = .05		
	N	1	2
Secondary Education	161	6,8582	
Higher Education	198	7,1212	
Primary Education	43		7,8837
Sig.		,380	1,000

According to geographical proximity, the difference in the values of loyalty is statistically significant,  $F(3, 398) = 18.362$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , and the subjects residing at 10-15 km obtained lower values of loyalty. The difference between those who reside in 0-5 Km and 6-10 Km the living and > 15 km is also significant.

Table 7: Geographical proximity and loyalty (Tukey test).

Dist.resd	Subset for alpha = .05			
	N	1	2	3
10-15 km	45	6,1074		
0-5 Km	277		7,0487	
6-10 km	31			7,7957
> 15 Km	49			7,8401
Sig.		1,000	1,000	,998

Regarding the practice time, the difference in the values of loyalty is statistically significant,  $F(3, 393) = 7.649$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , and the subjects with less practice time get lower values of loyalty.

Table 10: Loyalty and practice time (Tukey test)

Time Fq.	Subset for alpha = .05		
	N	1	2
2-3 years	98	6,6497	
1-2 years	91		7,1575
6-12 m	123		7,3442
3-6 m	85		7,4157
Sig.		1,000	,466

Thus, we compared and proved that there are significant differences in loyalty practitioners of fitness, according to the variation in educational background, geographic location or practice time.

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

We find that the vast majority of members surveyed belong to the age group between 21 and 40 - Young Adult. Knowing that we try to understand why there is a good return to physical activity in women's colleges more remote ages of the population, and concluded that it is necessary to redefine external marketing strategies for this group. Now, with regard to the importance of bonding in space, "affiliations" as an act of increasing the loyalty it was seen that the majority of the sample had indicated the gym and possibly one or more persons of the family. However, we observed that the friendship factor is relatively more significant, which allows us to consider that the home environment and small gyms these women themselves can create a cycle of rapprochement between the members belonging and fostering greater pleasure in belonging to the company.

Observed that the practice of activity also includes the research, as well as quotes Markest (2004) the upper class and upper middle. And the literary characteristics of fitness practitioners, most of it is licensed, were also given. However, there is one more loyal behavior among subjects with lower secondary education qualifications, thus confirming the thoughts of Kim and Forsythe (2002) the importance of knowing the segment and offer attractive offers for different types of customers.

Regarding the fact that the practitioners belong to the region close to the gym, we see the focal point in creating marketing tools to increase the external expansion of the consumer market, according to Coyle and Gokey (2005). And a factor of concern involves verifying the reasons why the individuals who reside farther they are less loyal.

### CONCLUSION

These results reaffirm the idea that the factors influencing sociodemográficos consumer loyalty. In effect, the knowledge acquired by this research, reported sociodemographic characteristics and values of loyalty to the practice of physical exercise, allowing us to delineate a profile for these consumers.

And as in all the research we are aware of the limitations of this study, first, the sample should have been more geographically heterogeneous and not so focused in the central region of Portugal. Second, the sample was limited to only 8 of the same chain gyms exclusively for women public, which have some identical products and services, but also vary in their bid, the attracting women with lifestyles and different motivations.

We recommend in future studies, the number of surveys distributed to the various regions of Portugal set profiles according to the same. Second, it would be interesting to apply the questionnaire to various academies in order to increase the variety of the sample. Thirdly, to increase knowledge about the consumers of exclusively female fitness would be interesting to introduce new variables that make up the lifestyles, such as attitude, belief and interest in the consumption and personality in order to increase knowledge on consumer fitness gyms for women.

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## **THE STUDY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AS AN EXPLANATORY VARIABLE FOR LOYALTY TO THE PRACTICE OF FITNESS IN LISBON**

### **ABSTRACT**

This examination intends to verify in which measure the sociodemographic factors influence loyalty to sportive consumption in 8 Fitness centers for women in Lisbon. 489 questionnaires were picked up and the loyalty indicators were verified from consumption to physical exercise practice of Villares e Coelho (2005). Data base were treated through Statistical Package for The Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0 for Windows) program version. The socialdemographic's analysis indicates that most practitioners belong to age group between 21 and 40 years old, existing differences along literally abilities, graphic nearness and time of fitness practice. We concluded that in this study the groups with higher loyalty were: a) lower literally ability; b) lower distance between work and home in relation to the gym; c) groups with 0 to 2 years practicing are more loyals.

**KEYWORDS:** Women. Social Demographic Factors. Loyalt.

### **RESUMEN**

Este estudio investigó como los factores sociodemográficos influyen en la lealtad del consumidor en los deportes de 8 centros de fitness para mujeres en Lisboa. Se realizaron 489 cuestionarios se recogieron y analizaron indicadores de la lealtad del consumidor a la práctica de ejercicio físico Villares y Coelho (2005). Los datos fueron procesados a través de la versión del Paquete Estadístico para Ciencias Sociales (SPSS 16.0 es Windows). El análisis sociodemográfico indica que la mayoría de los profesionales pertenecen al grupo de edad entre 21 y 40 años, con diferencias por nivel de educación, la ubicación geográfica, o adecuación de tiempo de práctica. Llegamos a la conclusión de que los grupos de estudio con mayor lealtad son: a) estudios más pequeños b) distancia más corta entre trabajo y vivienda en relación con la academia c) Los grupos con 0-2 años de práctica son más leales.

**PALABRAS-CLAVE:** las mujeres, los factores sociodemográficos. Lealtad.

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Cette étude examine la mesure dans laquelle les facteurs sociodémographiques influent sur la fidélité des consommateurs dans les centres sportifs de remise en forme 8 pour les femmes à Lisbonne. 489 questionnaires ont été collectés et testés des indicateurs de la fidélité des consommateurs à la pratique d'exercice physique Villares et Coelho (2005). Les données ont été traitées en utilisant la version du Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0 pour Windows). L'analyse sociodémographique montre que la plupart des praticiens appartiennent à la tranche d'âge entre les années 21 et 40, avec des différences selon le niveau d'éducation, la situation géographique ou de remise en forme le temps de pratique. Nous concluons que les groupes d'étude avec une plus grande loyauté sont les suivants: a) a) niveau d'éducation b) plus courte distance de travail et de logement par rapport à l'académie c) avec 0-2 ans de pratique sont plus fidèles.

**MOTS-CLÉS:** femmes, sociaux facteurs démographiques. Loyauté.

## **O ESTUDO DAS CARACTERÍSTICAS SÓCIODEMOGRÁFICAS COMO VARIÁVEL EXPLICATIVA PARA A LEALDADE À PRÁTICA DE FITNESS EM LISBOA.**

### **RESUMO**

Este estudo pretende verificar em que medida os fatores sociodemográficos influenciam a lealdade ao consumo esportivo em 8 centros de Fitness para mulheres em Lisboa. Foram recolhidos 489 questionários e verificados os indicadores da lealdade ao consumo à prática de exercício fisico de Villares e Coelho (2005). Os dados foram tratados através da versão do programa Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0 for Windows). A análise sociodemográfica indica que a maioria das praticantes pertencem ao grupo etário entre os 21 e 40 anos, existindo diferenças mediante as habilidades literárias, proximidade geográfica e tempo de prática de fitness. Concluímos que no estudo os grupos com maior lealdade foram: a) menor habilitação literária; b) menor distância do trabalho e moradia em relação à academia; c) grupos com 0 a 2 anos de prática são mais leais.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Mulheres, Fatores Sociodemográfico. Lealdade.