

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING LITERATURE ON MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING OF THE FITNESS CENTRE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The present paper discusses a literature analysis to provide a comprehensive overview of the current status of research on the management and marketing of fitness centres. Four data bases were utilised: SCOPUS, ABI INFORM, ISOC and SPORTDISCUS. The following combination of search terms was employed: 'fitness industry' and 'fitness centre'. These key words exposed about 87 articles that were published between 1980 and 2013. The articles were categorised chronologically and by publishing journal and content. The results revealed that the body of knowledge of fitness centres is heterogeneous. The thematic areas of the content of the articles are, in the order from the most number to the least number of publications: quality; satisfaction and loyalty; human resources; sociological aspects; organisational culture; segmentation; sport facilities; and innovation.

Key words: Fitness industry; Literature analysis; Systematic revision; Thematic structuring.

INTRODUCTION

The fitness sector is a market which, according to Afthinos *et al.* (2005), is in constant growth while they produce and coordinate services and products related to well-being and aesthetics. Yildiz (2011) explains these services as the overall intangible activities based on physical activities that create value for individuals by offering them physical, psychological, social and economic benefits. Specifically, IHRSA (2014) affirms that this sector gained over 78 million dollars at a global level of which Europe and North America were the greatest revenue generators. Currently, there are more than 165 000 fitness centres. Latin America has the largest number of sport facilities and North America has the largest number of members. Emerging clients include: Asia, Latin America and Africa, which are in the growth phase. According to data from the Special Euro-barometer 412 (2014), 11% of Europeans are members of a fitness centre with 1% being from Lithuania and 33% from Sweden. Similarly IHRSA (2014) affirms that more than 44 million of Europeans are members of the 49 000 fitness centres in Europe. This is important since the fitness sector has an 8.13% penetration in the European market (IHRSA, 2006), contributing to an economic growth of 4% to 6% annually. Of the major problems of this sector is the abandonment by the client (Ferrand *et al.*, 2010), which makes a healthy management of resources necessary to implement good marketing practices.

Additionally, customer loyalty has been associated with perceived quality and satisfaction in these organisations (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). In fact, studies in the fitness industry have shown that organisational culture can influence employee loyalty (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010), and employee loyalty affects customer loyalty. Hence, a correct management of human resources becomes indispensable for the success of these organisations being that there exists a direct employee-client relationship (Chelladurai, 2005). In actuality, innovation is necessary for growth and success of sport organisations (Yoshida *et al.*, 2013), where client behaviour will be determined by the innovations of the organisations and the distribution of the facilities. To address the clients' needs, the marketing plan establishes segmentation as one of the necessary actions to meet each client's need (Teva-Villén *et al.*, 2014), understanding that sociological aspects play a part due to the diversity of participants.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

In a sporting market, involving the practice of physical activity, it is necessary to examine the management practices of managers to identify the weak aspects and utilise its strengths. At the same time, inquiry about the marketing strategies implemented, which identify the direction of commercialisation of physical activity in this type of organisation. For this reason, cognisance of the body of knowledge is a necessary aspect to know what occurs within the sport organisations and propose future lines of research that support an emerging sector as is the industry of fitness. As there is an unknown variable on what the management and marketing practices being used in the fitness industry is, the objective of this paper was to reveal the articles published between 1980 and 2013 in relation to the management and marketing of fitness centres and propose future topics for investigation.

METHODOLOGY

Data sources and searches

An extensive literature search of electronic databases, including SCOPUS, ABI Inform, ISOC and SPORTDISCUS, was performed to identify relevant articles. The keywords used were: fitness industry; and fitness centre. The search terms which were used were a combination of the previous by using the Boolean logic. Simply, where similar concepts were assembled with 'OR' while intersecting concepts were joined with 'AND'.

The reference list of each selected article was examined to identify other potentially relevant papers following the technique known as 'snowball'. The last search was performed on 29 March, 2013. Data collection was conducted by 3 independent investigators from the University of Seville (Spain) and 1 researcher from West Virginia University (USA) with experience in management and marketing research of fitness centres. All researchers conducted their searches independently and then came together to discuss their findings and to achieve consensus regarding the information gathered.

Study selection

The titles and abstracts obtained were screened to remove the irrelevant or duplicated articles. The full texts of the remaining articles were then read in detail to identify their eligibility. The inclusion criteria were: (1) articles related to the content criteria for management and

marketing that were published in academic journals; (2) the topics of fitness industry and/or fitness centre, should appear in the title, abstract or keywords; (3) articles between 1980 and 2013 located in the areas of psychology, social sciences, management, marketing and accounting; and (4) articles published in English.

Methodological quality assessment

Once the relevant articles for review were finalised, the Jadad Scale was used to systematically determine the quality of the studies for approval and acceptance. A high standard of the results of the articles was sought for selection for the analysis. The standard set for selection was all the articles that earned a punctuation of 3 or more points, which is an indication of good quality. The Jadad Scale was chosen because it is an easy design and has the capacity to provide a global overview of the external and internal validity of the articles included in this systematic review.

Data analysis

Once the articles were selected through the systematic review, the authors proceeded on to data extraction. The data was analysed from the selected articles by 2 of the authors of the current review and subsequently checked by a third. Potential disagreements were discussed and the third author resolved any remaining disagreements. All the articles were categorised according to its nature by the personal criteria of the reviewers who proceeded to sort them in the agreed 8 themes: (1) Quality, satisfaction and loyalty; (2) Organisational culture; (3) Innovation; (4) Sports facilities; (5) Human resources; (6) Segmentation; (7) Sociological aspects; and (8) Other.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The initial search exposed 763 articles. However, most were eliminated based on repetitive appearances on multiple databases on all 4 databases or keyword topic of articles that had nothing to do with the relevant subject matter for this study. Ultimately, 113 articles met the criteria (Table 1).

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF ARTICLES ACCORDING TO DESCRIPTORS

Database	Key words	Total	Selected
SCOPUS	Fitness Industry	49	18
	Fitness Centre	577	31
ABI INFORM	Fitness Industry	17	17
	Fitness Centre	3	3
SPORTDISCUS	Fitness Industry	87	33
	Fitness Centre	28	9
ISOC	Fitness Industry	1	1
	Fitness Centre	1	1
Total		763	113

The initial search resulted in 113 articles of which 87 were used when the previously explained criteria based on intended content was applied. When considering the year of publication, an increase in articles addressing the topic of interest can be observed. For example, from 1980 and 1990, 7 articles were published. The first decade of the 21st century produced 52 publications and this continued to rise in the second decade which had already produced 27 publications on this topic as of March 2013 (Figure 1).

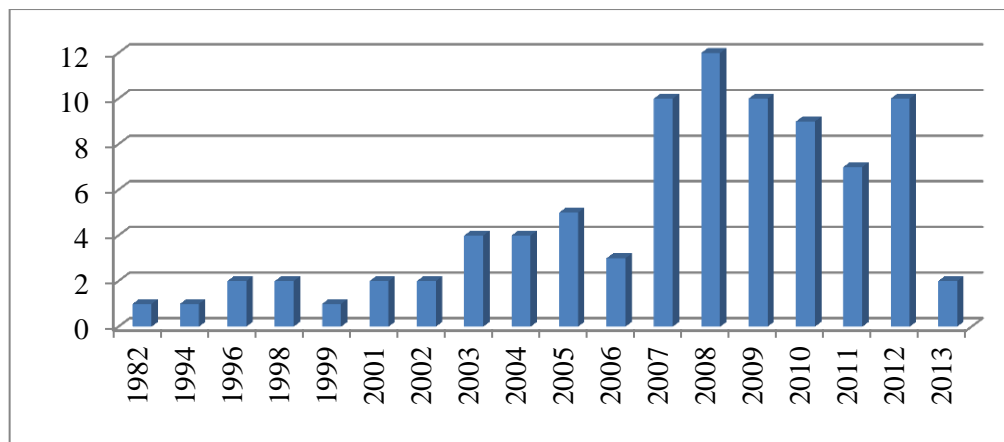


FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS BY YEAR

Regarding where the studies were published, there is a rich diversity of journals having accounted for up to 64 indexed journals that published on these topics. Journals responsible for having a greater number of publications on the subject are as follows: *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing* with 7 articles published; *Perceptual and Motor Skills* (journal) with 5 articles published; and *Managing Leisure*, *Managing Service Quality* and *Sport Management Review* with 4 articles each; or what is equivalent to 6.25% of the journals that published articles on the subject (Table 2).

TABLE 2. TITLE OF JOURNAL AND NUMBER OF RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Title of Journal	No. publ. per Journal
International Journal of Sport Management & Marketing	7
Perceptual and Motor Skills	5
Managing Leisure; Managing Service Quality; Sport Management Review	4
Journal of Sport Management; Psychology of Sport & Exercise	3
Revista de Psicología del Deporte; South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education & Recreation; Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal	2

TABLE 2. TITLE OF JOURNAL AND NUMBER OF RELATED PUBLICATIONS (cont.)

Title of Journal	No. publ. per Journal
ACHPER Healthy Lifestyles Journal;	Journal of Education and Work
Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly	Journal of Health Care Marketing
African Journal for Physical, Health	Journal of Legal Aspects of Sport
Education, Recreation & Dance	Journal of Management Education
Apunts. Educación Física y Deporte	Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs
Behavior Modification	Journal of Retail & Leisure Property
British Journal of Sociology	Journal of Science & Medicine in Sport
Cuadernos de Psicología del Deporte	Journal of Services Marketing
Cultural Studies	Journal of Sports Medicine & Physical
Education, Physical Training, Sport	Fitness
European Business Review	Journal of Targeting, Measurement and
European Journal of Cultural Studies	Analysis for Marketing
European Journal of Sport Science	Journal of Wuhan Institute of Physical
European Sport Management Quarterly	Education
Gestao e Producao	Leisure Studies
Health Marketing Quarterly	Missouri Journal of Health, Physical
Human Resource Management Journal	Education, Recreation & Dance
ICHPER-SD Journal	Movimento
Industrial Relations Journal	Personnel Psychology
International Journal of Business and	Professionalization of Exercise Physiology
Social Science	Psychological Reports
International Journal of Exercise Science	Quality and Quantity
International Journal of Medicine and	Relations Industrielles
Science of Physical Activity and Sport	Research Quarterly for Exercise & Sport
International Journal of Sport and	RETOS. Nuevas Tendencias en
Exercise Psychology	Educación Física, Deporte y Recreación
International Journal of Sports Law &	Small Group Research
Management	Social Behaviour and Personality
International Journal of Sport	Social Marketing Quarterly
Management	Sociology of Sport Journal
International Journal of the History of	Spanish Journal of Psychology
Sport	Total Quality Management
Investigación y Marketing	Total Quality Management & Business
Irish Marketing Review	Excellence
Journal of Aging & Physical Activity	Urban Anthropology
Journal of Beijing Sport University	Work, Employment and Society
Journal of Consumer Health on the	
Internet	

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The total number of articles published in journals indexed in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) was 44 of the 87 selected. Of these, 75% were published from the year 2005 and beyond (Figure 2).

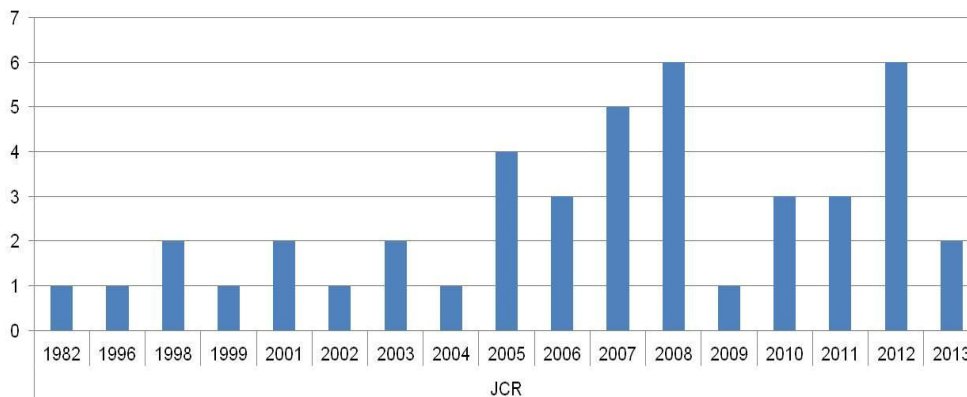


FIGURE 2. NUMBER OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN JCR JOURNAL BY YEAR

All articles used in the present study were analysed and categorised (Table 3) according to 8 thematic areas previously provided.

TABLE 3. THEMATIC CONTENT AREAS OF STUDY

Thematic areas	Selected articles
Quality, satisfaction and loyalty	29
Organisational culture	5
Innovation	2
Sports facilities	3
Human resources	21
Segmentation	3
Sociological aspects	17
Other	7

Quality, satisfaction and loyalty

The literature suggests a connection between quality, satisfaction and loyalty. These 3 are often measured in the same study. Therefore, they have been placed in the same category. There seemed to be a growing interest to measure quality, satisfaction and loyalty of fitness centre clients. An example is the CALIDFIT scale (García *et al.*, 2012), which measures a direct relationship between consumer quality perception and the level of satisfaction of fitness centre consumers. The less specific 6-Sigma scale (Cheng *et al.*, 2012), offers interesting possibilities to measure the specifics of the customer and improved service. Satisfaction surveys (De Barros & Gonçalves, 2009), measure client expectations which, as expressed by

the authors, are easy to resolve. Service quality was measured in various studies through different instruments. Chia-Ming *et al.* (2005) established the constructs that give rise to the satisfaction of the clients in the Taiwanese fitness industry by using the Scale of Service Quality for Participant Sport (SSQPS). The QUESC questionnaire utilised by Afthinos *et al.* (2005) and Bodet (2009), suggest that the nature and intensity of the product of consumption exerts a strong influence on exercise service elements in the case of consumers, bringing about an impact on customer satisfaction and the value of the product consumed. Qualitative studies defined psychological benefits of the sporting practices to create customer loyalty and employee satisfaction (Athanasopoulou, 2008). Satisfaction relates to the concept of pleasure, mental change and changes in the physical world (Lagrosen & Lagrosen, 2007).

Satisfaction surveys have revealed gaps in the study of the fitness industry in the areas of quality management strategies (Hurley, 2004; Soita, 2012). Researchers have placed emphasis on understanding how marketing strategies in a fitness centre can influence the improvement of service resulting in customer satisfaction (Tawse & Keogh, 1998; Basheer, 2010), attracting new customers and keeping those they already have by proposing strategies of customer loyalty (Annesi, 1998; Annesi & Annesi, 1999; Pinillos, 2004; Annesi, 2007; Annesi & Unruh, 2007). Placebo studies testing for the interest of clients in a control group were also found (Estabrooks *et al.*, 1996). The relationship between the level of grip and the satisfaction of clients according to the treatment that the staff of the centre offers has been investigated (Dhurup *et al.*, 2006; Athanasopoulou, 2008; Athanasopoulou & Mylonakis, 2009; Dhurup & Surujlal, 2010), and propose different ways to increase the quality of interpersonal relationships among workers and customers.

Other researchers focus on creating conceptual models that examine and provide value in the sporting establishments (Ferrand *et al.*, 2010). Along the same line, Moxham and Wiseman (2009) presented the case of a fitness centre leader in the United Kingdom and examined how the development, implementation and measurement of quality can be used to obtain a competitive advantage. They concluded that in order to provide quality service in fitness centres, the measurement should be conducted without the pressure of achieving specific objectives or determined standards. Alexandris *et al.* (2008) examined service quality when surveying those with the highest responsibility of a fitness centre chain in Greece. They found that several aspects showed direct relationships with the loyalty and the perceived quality of the service, such as facility design, logo or nostalgia.

Some studies analyse customer loyalty and the use of sport facilities. Hill and Christine-Green (2012) analysed different types of sport (individual and team), as well as facilities. The results revealed that the design of the installation had more impact on the frequency of participation in a fitness centre, and a minimal impact on the participation of the customers of the sport facilities. Customer loyalty can be assessed by the personal profile of the customer, such as age (García & Pires, 2010) and lifestyle (Suresh *et al.*, 2011). Whereas, MacIntosh and Doherty (2007) identify greater quality of the fitness centres from the better allocation of the organisational culture through the creation of a system of values, beliefs and assumptions inherent in their own brand. These promote loyalty among customers and in turn improve the message for potential customers. On the other hand, some of the larger fitness chains create customer loyalty based on an image associated with a quality product sold only in exclusive establishments. This resulted in being beneficial for both the brand and the establishment.

This symbiotic relationship can be appreciated in the dynamic of THE COACH APPROACH® and the YMCA Fitness Centres in Atlanta (USA) (Annesi, 2007).

Organisational culture

Organisational culture has been defined in different ways and has led to a large variety of concepts and methods for studying the construct. It is particularly in the body of knowledge of the fitness industry that authors like Enric W. Macintosh and Alison Doherty emerge as the principal investigators. This construct has been understood primarily as an internal phenomenon of the company that has an impact on the staff. However, in recent times, positioning is a factor that is part of the company's image (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2007). Organisational culture is known as the values, beliefs and basic assumptions that are guided by the leadership, shared by the employees and that explain how things are done in the organisation (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2007). MacIntosh and Doherty (2007, 2008) conclude that customer perception of organisational culture is significantly associated with satisfaction and the intention to stay and continue within the fitness centre. Later, MacIntosh and Doherty (2010) studied the impact of organisational culture on the satisfaction and the intention to resign in the case of the personnel and revealed that organisational culture explains 14.3% of the variance of employee satisfaction and 50.3% of the intent to resign from their employment. The transitory nature of jobs in this industry has an impact on the management of this type of sport organisation (MacIntosh & Walker, 2012).

Innovation

In relation to the work framed in innovation, it should be remembered that, although it has been a topic that has not developed, there are some authors that delve into this aspect from different points of view. Yuan *et al.* (2009) propose a model for the analysis of innovative activities for the company, developing the process into 3 stages: innovation-innovation; innovation processes; and results of the innovation. Success can be analysed by means of 4 indicators: mastery of technology; good governance; diversified talent recruitment; and improvement in the positioning of the brand. In another approach, Zolfagharian and Paswan (2008) studied the way in which the customers perceived innovations built into the service elements in a fitness centre by developing a scale of 32 items from 7 categories: administration; indoor facilities; outdoor facilities; employees; core services; technology; and capacity of response.

Sport facilities

Research directed on sport facilities has been approached from different perspectives. Arbour-Nicitopoulos and Ginis (2011) did a study at 44 sport facilities in Ontario (Canada) that were identified as 'accessible' proving that none of them completely related to people with reduced mobility. Recreational facilities were more inclusive than fitness centres, especially in the areas of entry, parking and professional support during workouts. Marmol *et al.* (2010) addressed the quality of the fitness centres in a Spanish city in relation to the prescription of physical exercise, the services offered, the infrastructure and the equipment of the facilities. Their study revealed that the majority of the facilities do not influence the workouts of their members, despite the fact that they offered a multidisciplinary team of physical therapists, nutritionists and personal trainers as profound features of the facilities.

Furthermore, Garcia and Sañudo (2009) specifically evaluated the perception of directors and coordinators of private fitness centres relating to the adequacy of their facilities for users who were over 60 years old.

Human resources

Because the fitness industry is a service industry, it could suggest that human resources play an influential role. Studies conclude that in the majority of the cases, articles relating to human resources stipulate this as the most common issue of concern to researchers, which may be due to the fitness industry strongly emphasising customer service. Thus, in keeping with the continued evolution of the fitness industry, the organisation should be willing to adapt its most precious resource in this maelstrom of change. Getting to know the organisations becomes very interesting for researchers and managers. In this sense, knowing and determining the performance indicators of an organisation becomes a popular topic of study.

Emotional stability and the extraversion of the workers in fitness centres have an impact on the performance of organisations more than other personality traits (Judge & Erez, 2007). Maconachie and Sappey (2013) analysed the relations between the workers, managers and the whole system of relationships that occurs in a fitness centre. Lubinsky *et al.* (2011) examined the philanthropic spirit in the fitness centre and the emotional commitment to the company, their support at certain events and the employees who participated.

Continuing with the success of organisations, the satisfaction of human resources were considered which is determined by maintaining positive environments favouring the happiness of the workers and that support the guidelines of OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Act) (Fried, 2009). Also, one of the most prominent figures currently in the fitness industry is the personal trainer. Hence, the degree of satisfaction of personal trainers has become a topic for further study. Coaches that work for a company with lower levels of satisfaction to the self-employed are mainly due to the level of earned wages and to the limited opportunities for promotion (Moodley & Coopoo, 2006). However, the greatest reward for coaches is earned by the social recognition within the fitness centre (Sappey & Maconachie, 2012). Coach evaluations and their rehiring were investigated in various studies (Sartore & Cunningham, 2006, 2007; Chiu *et al.*, 2010).

On the other hand, Winger (2002) studied the relationship between certain features of the fitness instructor and the enjoyment of the users. Their results show that only 3 of the 9 characteristics accounted for 17% of the variability of enjoyment: the ability of the technician; communication skills; and the pleasure of the other participants in the class. Similarly, Harju *et al.* (2003) addressed the preference of the women, who do exercise in a fitness centre, for a type of coach on the basis of their training goals.

There seems to be a lack of regulation of and consensus about the qualification and training of human resources. Some of the work focusing on this topic has been done by Viallon *et al.* (2003), Lloyd (2005a, 2005b), Lloyd (2008), Sekendiz *et al.* (2009) and Lloyd and Payne (2013). Koustelios (2003) sought to develop a valid and reliable instrument to identify the skills needed to manage the fitness centres. The results revealed 4 dimensions that related to

marketing and communication, human resources management, financial management and administration. Also, there were significant differences between the management of fitness centres of different sizes. Managers are often the subjects for studies and different approaches are applied for the analysis of data (García *et al.*, 2011). Bower (2008a, 2008b) provided information on the career and counselling women seeking to attain a management position in a fitness centre.

Segmentation

Authors such as Woolf (2008) argue the necessity of knowing the users of the fitness centres with the idea of offering a service adapted to their needs. He raises the service packages as a competitive advantage within the industry of fitness and asserts that the gyms can apply marketing strategies by developing different packages with complementary services that are more personalised and based on the profiles of consumers. Teixeira and Correia (2009) segment customers of fitness centres on the Island of Madeira (Portugal) by classifying them into happy, unhappy and unmarried without loyalty to the club. This proved to be of interest particularly in relation to the specialisation of the centres and strategies of loyalty toward the users. In another line of investigation, Mischler *et al.* (2009) emphasise the relationship between the fitness services and profiles of managers. As claimed by these authors, the manager of a fitness centre plays a key role in the company and the method of management of the centre would depend largely on the profile of the owner or manager, as the dynamic and nature of management is derived from the balance between reason and passion of managers.

Sociological aspects

There has been a steady growth in interest in sociological aspects in the literature. In the leisure and sport sector and the concern for quality of life, several authors have analysed the evolution of the fitness industry, as it has adapted to the needs and demands of the users (Van-Hilvoorde, 2008). For its part, Howell and Ingham (2001) analysed the concept of lifestyle that was mobilised in the debate on health care in the United States.

Other researchers focused their study on certain sectors of the population. Dobbins *et al.* (2012) studied the agreement drawn up between the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Centre-Shreveport and a local franchise of the chain of fitness centres, *Curves International*, whose purpose it was to satisfy the concerns of women, who are known to use different ways to search for information on health. Madeson *et al.* (2010) developed their work with the intention to learn from the experiences of women with personal trainers. They concluded that women valued these experiences positively and that it depended on the motivation, the results achieved, the qualities of the coach and their relationship.

Another study examined the Muslim population from the point of view of integration (Shavit & Wiesenbach, 2012). In the article by Leshkovich (2008), the case of a female fitness centre in a middle class area in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), is presented and how the trend in the frequency of use of partners changed the following of fashion and the process of transforming their body. As a result, the fitness centre adapted to new trends and the evolution of female stereotypes in order to not lose the market share.

Research findings have demonstrated differences between male and female ideals. Harris and Marandi (2002) assert that men, in general, aim to be muscular and women work towards having thin bodies and being supple. However, the research aimed to examine whether gender is an aspect of mediation in the construction of long-term relationships with clients in the sector of health and fitness. With regard to the identification of these physical ideals, authors, such as Frew and McGillivray (2005), claim that these ideals are highly influenced by the state of modern consumerism and the media by identifying trends at fitness centres.

From the perspectives within the concepts of health and quality of life in fitness centres, Reverter and Barbany (2007) found that the sector has evolved, transforming itself from the physical fitness and exercise angle to a concept mostly related to leisure and health. Smith-Maguire (2001) argues that the structure and organisation of personal training determine the manner in which fitness is sold and what type of physical activity is offered at the centre. Whatever is possible is influenced by the training and qualifications of these professionals.

Other investigations like those by Liu (2007) and Tian-Ping (2007) evaluated this sector in China. There is an over-saturation of the market of fitness centres in the northwest area of China (Tian-Ping, 2007). Tian-Ping (2007) argues that only the big chains survive and make profit. Within the dynamics of survival in competitive markets, Fallon (2004) makes proposals for the future of the fitness industry that are perfectly reconcilable according to Kurscheidt *et al.* (2003). Social networks have been formed at the fitness centres (Crossley, 2008). The formation of the social capital of its members brings a high level of integration between some of the members. Finally, Parviainen (2011) conducted a case study of the program *Les Mills Fitness*, which is a service industry of fitness that normalises body movements in order to obtain benefits. This reflects on the fitness industry and the effect it has on the interaction between teachers and fitness clients.

Other

Studies with a research purpose not falling within the themes previously mentioned are categorised as 'others'. Huddleston *et al.* (2012) examined the relationship between employees' perceptions on the motivational climate in its fitness centre, their intrinsic motivation toward exercise, and their perception of the concern for its pattern of health behaviours. Another line of research was followed by Kenworthy and Hrivnak (2012), who propose and analyse the use of a workout in the gymnasium as an introduction to the research on the relationship between the physical and mental state. On the other hand, Santos *et al.* (2011) devised a tool for the identification and analysis of the competencies and strategic resources in service operations.

The use of automated external defibrillators in the management of risk and liability of the fitness centres was of interest to Sekendiz and Quick (2011). In line with this, Norton and Norton (2008) report that there are no laws in Australia that would compel the fitness centres to install them, however, they consider it advisable to account for these defibrillators in the larger centres and in states where there are high-risk groups. From the perspective of a fitness centre as a business, Parrot (1996) based the strategies followed by the hospitals on five principles to achieve success, namely: understand the importance of the strategic business of fitness for the organisation of health care; know the customer; offer a differentiated product;

hire the best qualified; and be a smart seller. Forrester and Upton (1994) made a contribution by suggesting an audit program that provides ease in its use for measuring and improving the safety and health performance in fitness centres.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This work makes a contribution to the body of knowledge with this review of literature on research related to the management and marketing of fitness centres. The present study could assist researchers and practitioners alike to familiarise themselves with the extent of the work published in the more relevant data bases. In the publications analysed in this study, there seems to be a greater interest in the topics related to quality, satisfaction and loyalty, as well as human resource management and sociological aspects. However, the topics of organisational culture, innovation, sporting facilities and segmentation were less common. Subsequently, the studies that make up the present revision suggest the importance of analysing those aspects which could impact on customer loyalty, one of the major problems of the fitness industry. Nonetheless, the investigation had some limitations. The first is related to the number of data bases used which the researchers could perhaps have expanded to include more articles. In addition, the two search terms utilised may have omitted articles that could have been relevant and of interest. Therefore, for future investigations, it is recommended that the consulted databases and search terms be increased.

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