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INFLUENCING FACTORS BEHIND CUSTOMERS ATTENDING FITNESS CENTRE -A Study on Fitness Centre Clients in Visakhapatnam

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Abstract:-The point of any commercial organization is not just “to create a customer”, but to retain the customer. To achieve a competitive advantage, it has become necessary for organizations to differentiate themselves in the minds of customers as customers are the central focus of any organization. Therefore the mission of an organization should be to create, grow and nurture ongoing relationships with them by understanding them in terms of their very needs and requirements, perceptions and various factors influencing their behaviour. In order to retain customers, it is important for marketers to have in depth knowledge of what each individual customer wants and the capacity they have to continue to add value to the needs of the customer. The purpose of this study is descriptive in nature and aims to know the influencing factors behind the clients attending fitness centres in Visakhapatnam City. 100 members were asked several questions, 45 of whom opined physical exercise improves their health conditions and helps to stay away from diabetes., 23 stated it overcomes the problem of early ageing, 19 stated it develops their self-control, 13 found it as a way to gain status, The study would be helpful to different individuals interested to practice physical exercise, owners and trainers of fitness centres and also future researchers.

Keywords:Fitness centres, Influencing factors, Physical Exercise and Health.

INTRODUCTION :-

At this juncture the people across the world are more awake than past by considering their career, income, standard of living and physical fitness. Fitness club is a place where last group of people try to attain their physical fitness through exercise. Again, the fitness industry has been contributing in a great deal in various economies in terms of generating revenues, employment and physical harmony of the Nations. Fitness industry has great contribution in the world economy. It is one of India's largest sectors, in terms of income and employment, and the sector is escalating rapidly.

During the 1990s, Indian healthcare grew at a compound annual rate of 16%. Today the total value of the sector is more than \$34 billion. This translates to \$34 per capita, or roughly 6% of GDP. By 2012, India's healthcare sector is projected to grow to nearly \$40 billion. It is believed that with the active involvement of the government and private participants, the wellness industry in India can create visible impact on a global scale. By 2015, wellness services alone are expected to have the potential to generate three million job opportunities. 70% of urban Indians are obese or over weight (source India Today) India is the diabetic capital of the world with 63 million affected individuals in 2012 (WHO), the number of Indians with cardiac disease had increased from 1% in 1960 to over 14% of the country's urban population in 2012 (source International Heart protection summit). Even as the scenario is grim and likely to get worse, an encouraging counter-reality is beginning to emerge. India is beginning to move from cure to prevention; one of the biggest prevention measures lies in the simple imitative to wear track pants, sports shoes and head to fitness centre, there is a growing recognition that just any fitness centre won't do, only a specialised fitness centres with the complement of qualified trainers, dietician and masseur will work. When it comes to gym infrastructure, India is one of the most under penetrated countries in the world. The Indian fitness industry is highly under penetrated compared with several developed and developing nations. For instance USA accounts for 38% of total health club

members worldwide while the share of India is 0.3% (source IMF, World economic outlook 2013).

From the observations we have found that, in India, Visakhapatnam, being the major city in North Coastal region of Andhra Pradesh has a good number of fitness centres which are operating and their number is also increasing every year where a great range of different individuals are joining. Present study aims to explore the main influencing factors behind people joining fitness centres. The study is descriptive in nature. 100 of different Fitness centre clients are surveyed through a questionnaire which is used to know their profile and main reasons to join the fitness clubs, some descriptive statistics are used to analyze the findings.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Current study benefits different stakeholders of Fitness Industry like the fitness centre members, the fitness industry, the fitness trainers, the government policy makers and future researchers. The members of the fitness clubs will be benefited by getting an in depth knowledge about the contribution of the fitness centres towards improving their health status and its psychological and social impact on their lives. The fitness centre operators could understand the motives of their customers which would give them a significant input in formulating their marketing strategies to attract and retain the members.

Fitness trainers also can arrange the fitness programs that match with customers' preferences in instrumental or free hand exercise practice of the members. Inputs would also be helpful for the Government policy makers in formulating health policies for the people keeping in view their needs for fitness clubs which plays a major role in keeping citizens physically and mentally fit, as well the contributions of the industry in generating a significant portion of revenues and employment. Future researcher gets direction to further studies on the topic to discover the socio-economic impact of the fitness clubs in an economy as well as the relationship among different variables relating to fitness. Thus the study has greater significance in relation to many sectors like health, beauty, entertainment and people across the globe.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Regular physical activity develops the sense of community and belonging with context gains that will promote economic development and identity in population national representation (Chalip, L., 2005). Fitness industry has potential to grow in the EU and fitness firms are able to provide distinct services adapted to several market segments (Woolf, J., 2008). Being good for economic development and possible to be adapted in different economic activities, few is known about its key profitability determinants.

In the past eight years we found an extraordinary increase in the number of these types of firms operating in Portugal (higher than national average). Fitness centres have a special significance to improve and contribute to increase the global population physical activity, to better off their

quality of life and to minimize health costs; in a certain way they grew based upon fashion and not reliable economic knowledge; therefore, knowing the determinants of these firms is important to help the market determine the minimum scale of efficiency to survive and operate a long time in this difficult market.

Most of the empirical studies on firm growth try to explore the relationships between growth and size, growth rate or firm age and the results have been non clearly conclusive, tests being either statistically positive or negative (Lotti et al., 2009). Other authors tried to explore the relationship between firm growth and internal financing concluding that financing constraints play a very harmful role on their growth (Fagiolo and Luzzi, 2006).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objective of the study is to find influencing factors behind different people attending fitness centres and the sub objectives of the study are:

- To study the social and psychological impact of fitness centre on clients.
- To measure the satisfaction levels of members of fitness centres.
- To recommend some guidelines to ensure qualitative services in Fitness centres of Visakhapatnam.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

Population and Sample:

As the study is to find motivational factors behind joining fitness centre, the population included is mainly the members of the different fitness centres in Visakhapatnam city in India. 100 members were selected randomly throughout the Visakhapatnam city for the study.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION:

The sample was selected using simple random sampling technique and primary data was collected from the members of the 20 fitness centres in Visakhapatnam city. The literature was collected through reviewing different articles, books, periodicals, journals, magazines, published reports, and relevant websites.

LIMITATIONS:

The fitness club operators are reluctant to provide the information. Respondents are also found busy enough in doing their exercises during the survey time to provide the information.

TABLE 1: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Sources of Information	AGE					Total
	15-25	25-35	35-45	45-55	Above 55	
Doctor's recommendations	4	6	6	5	6	27
Advertisements in print & broadcast media	8	6	3	2	1	20
Self awareness	6	9	5	5	5	30
Information from friends and peer groups	4	5	3	3	1	16
Participation in physical fitness meetings	1	1	0	1	0	3
Others	1	1	1	1	0	4
Total	24	28	18	17	13	100

INTERPRETATION:

Out of 100 respondents, 28 are of age group 25-35, whereas 24 of the respondents are of 15-25 age group, 18 members are between 35-45, 17 between 45-55 and 13 of above 55 age group. Members of Fitness centres choose their fitness clubs through obtaining information from different sources. Majority of the respondents are self aware (30) of advantages of exercise, and (27) of them are exercising due to the recommendations given by Doctors. On the other hand, 20 of the total respondents collect information from Radio/ TV programs and 16 from friends. Thus the fitness industry people should carefully promote their business through different communication vehicles.

TABLE 2: THE REASONS BEHIND ATTENDING FITNESS CLUBS

Age	Motivational factors to attend fitness club					Total
	Maintaining physical accord and avoids early ageing	Leisure	Making new friends	Represents a healthy lifestyle	Improves health Condition	
15-25	7	3	6	5	3	24
25-35	10	1	4	7	6	28
35-45	4	1	0	4	9	18
45-55	3	2	0	4	8	17
Above 55	0	1	1	4	7	13
Total	24	8	11	24	33	100

Interpretation:

The main reason of practicing physical exercise found is to improve health condition (33). Others include representation of healthy lifestyle (24), maintaining physical accord and avoiding early ageing (24), making new friends (11) and for enjoying leisure (08). Total 28 % of respondents found on age group 25 to 35 of whom 10 thinks they practice exercise to maintain physical accord and avoiding early ageing, 7 thinks healthy lifestyle, 6 to improve their physical health, 4 for making new friends & and very less number(1) to pass their leisure which could be ignorable.. Total 24% of respondents found on age group 15 to 25 of which 7 thinks to maintain physical accord and avoiding early ageing , 6 to make new friends, 5 for healthy lifestyle , 3 thinks it improves health condition, and a kind of leisure. Between age groups 35-45 & 45-55 majority concluded that exercise improves their health condition and represents a healthy life style.

TABLE 3: PHYSICAL EXERCISE TO OVERCOME DISEASES

	AGE	Which of the diseases enumerated below can be avoided by taking part in individual or collective physical activities?					Total
		Obesity	Diabetes/Kidney Problems	Cardiovascular diseases	Bone/Joint Problems	Others	
M A L E	15-25	9	5	3	2	0	19
	25-35	9	5	4	2	1	21
	35-45	4	2	3	3	1	13
	45-55	2	4	2	4	0	12
	Above 55	0	3	2	3	1	9
	Total	24	20	14	15	3	74
F E M A L E	15-25	3	1	1	0	0	5
	25-35	2	2	0	2	1	7
	35-45	2	1	1	1	0	5
	45-55	0	2	1	2	0	5
	Above 55	0	1	1	2	0	4
	Total	7	6	4	6	1	26

Interpretation:

Out of 74 males 24 male respondents think they could be away from obesity and maintain correct weight, 20 think they can stay away from diabetes/kidney problems, 15 think they could get rid of bone/joint problems and 14 opined they could prevent themselves from cardio vascular diseases by practicing physical exercise in the fitness clubs. 21 of total respondents (74) are in age group 25 – 35, among which 9 think exercise is a way to beat obesity and 5 think they could also avoid diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. 19 are between 15-25 age and majority of them think exercise is the way to be away from obesity and Diabetes/kidney problems.

13 & 12 respondents each are in the age group of 35-45 & 45-55 and majority of them opined that they could be away from bone/joint pains by doing proper exercise as well diabetes/kidney problems.

TABLE 4: PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND ITS BENEFIT ON HEALTH IN FITNESS CLUB

	AGE	Is practicing physical exercises beneficial for your health in fitness club?			Total
		YES	NO	Can't Say	
M A L E	15-25	16	2	1	19
	25-35	19	0	2	21
	35-45	11	1	1	13
	45-55	12	0	0	12
	Above 55	9	0	0	9
	Total	67	3	4	74
F E M A L E	15-25	4	0	1	5
	25-35	7	0	0	7
	35-45	5	0	0	5
	45-55	5	0	0	5
	Above 55	4	0	0	4
	Total	25	0	1	26

Interpretation:

Out of 74 male and 26 Female candidates all most everybody accepted that practicing physical exercises in fitness club is very much beneficial for their health, except a few who opined they can't say exactly and a very minute percentage said NO which could be ignorable.

TABLE 5: INTERNAL FACTORS STIMULATING THE CHOICE OF THE FITNESS CLUB

	AGE	Choices of Location of fitness club					Total
		Location advantage of the fitness club	Modern training equipment	Specialized demonstration by personnel	Low prices	Name &Fame	
M A L E	15-25	4	5	4	3	3	19
	25-35	6	4	4	5	2	21
	35-45	3	3	2	4	1	13
	45-55	4	2	3	2	1	12
	Above 55	4	2	2	1	0	9
	Total	21	16	15	15	7	74
F E M A L E	15-25	2	1	2	0	0	5
	25-35	3	2	1	0	1	7
	35-45	1	1	1	2	0	5
	45-55	2	0	1	1	1	5
	Above 55	2	1	1	0	0	4
	Total	10	5	6	3	2	26

Interpretation:

Out of 74 male candidates' majority between age groups 45-55 and above 55 attends Fitness Centres if they are in proximity and nearby their houses and they are least bothered about Price and reputation of the Fitness centres. They give moderate preference to modern equipment and specialised training personnel. Between age groups 15-25 & 25-35 they mostly prefer modern equipment and demonstration by specialised personnel. Age groups 25-35 & 35-45 are more price sensitive. Out of 26 Female candidates almost all age groups ranging from 15-25 to above 55, majority attends Fitness centres because of location advantage and in patronage of modern Fitness training equipment and they are not price sensitive.

TABLE 6: PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL IMPACT

What is the impact of physical exercises on your psychological condition?	AGE					Total
	15-25	25-35	35-45	45-55	Above 55	
Fighting stress and depression	4	9	5	4	3	25
Creating positive , emotional and affective feelings	8	7	4	5	5	29
Developing imagination, creativity and self-control	7	7	5	3	2	24
Developing courage, will and responsibility	5	5	4	5	3	22
TOTAL	24	28	18	17	13	100
What is the social impact of attending the fitness club on you?	15-25	25-35	35-45	45-55	Above 55	Total
Gaining status	4	6	5	6	5	26
Making friends	9	8	3	2	2	24
Adaptation to the requirements of the environment	6	7	5	5	4	27
Easy communication and social integration	5	7	5	4	2	23
TOTAL	24	28	18	17	13	100

Interpretation:

Physical exercise also has a great impact on people's psychological condition. 29 of total 100 respondents think that practicing physical exercise in fitness clubs create positive and affective emotional feelings, 25 think it fight against depression and solitude,

24 thinks it enhances their ability of self control and creativity and 22 think it enhances their courage. 7 of age group 15 to 25 & 25-35, 5 of age group 35 to 45, 3 of age group 45 to 55, 2 of age group above 55 practices exercise to develop imagination and self control. On the other hand, 8 of age group 15 to 25, 7 of age group 25-35, 4 of age group 35 to 45, and 5 of age groups 45 to 55 and above 55 respectively join to create positive, emotional and affective feelings. 5 respondents each of age groups 15 to 25, 25-35 & 45-55, 4 of age group 35-45 practice exercise in fitness clubs to develop their courage.

Social impact of attendance in fitness clubs also found good. 26 of total interviewees think membership of any fitness centre enhances their social status, 24 hangs out with friends while practicing exercise in fitness centres, 27 to adapt the requirement of their present environmental settings, and 23 find they maintain social communication easy through fitness centres.

CONCLUSION:

Physical exercise is an age-old concept. Since the beginning of human civilization, physical exercise is being

practiced to maintain the harmony of human body. Early researchers found that the industry is contributing a lot to the GDP of various developed economies in American and European Countries and various reasons behind practicing exercise. The present study found that the members joining in the fitness centres are able to improve their physical condition, enhances their self control and confidence levels as well it has a very positive psychological and social impact on their lives. Members of the clubs prefer to join the clubs based on proximity to their locations and feel pleasant to practice physical exercise. The study has greater significance to the different stakeholders of the industry such as the members, the operators of fitness clubs and future researchers also where they get clues to their further studies.

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