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Factors Influencing People to Join a Gym in Urban Areas

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ABSTRACT: Rapid urbanization has contributed to increasingly sedentary lifestyles, raising concerns about physical inactivity and lifestyle-related health issues. In response, gyms and fitness centres have become important facilities that support physical fitness and well-being among urban residents. This study investigates the key factors influencing individuals to join gyms in urban areas by examining demographic characteristics, lifestyle motivations, accessibility, and environmental influences.

A descriptive and quantitative research design was adopted. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 52 respondents using convenience sampling. The collected data were analysed using percentage analysis, ranking analysis, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to identify significant patterns and influencing factors.

The results indicate that young adults aged 18–24 represent the largest group of gym participants, with students forming the majority of respondents. Health improvement and muscle gain emerged as the primary motivations for joining gyms. Among the factors influencing gym selection, the availability of modern equipment and affordable membership fees were the most significant. Time constraints and high membership costs were identified as the major barriers to gym participation. Promotional strategies such as discounts and additional services like nutrition advice were also found to positively influence membership decisions. The ANOVA results reveal no statistically significant differences among motivational, promotional, and psychological factors, indicating that gym membership decisions are influenced by a combination of interconnected factors.

The findings indicate that urban residents view gyms as more than exercise facilities; they function as environments that support healthy living and personal discipline. Increasing participation depends on factors such as affordability, accessibility, quality equipment, flexible timings, and a welcoming service environment.

KEYWORDS: Urban lifestyle, Gym participation, Fitness motivation, Physical activity, Health awareness, Urban fitness behavior.

I. INTRODUCTION

Urbanization and modern lifestyles have significantly reduced the level of physical activity among individuals, leading to increased health concerns such as obesity, stress, and lifestyle-related diseases. Due to sedentary work patterns and technological dependence, many urban residents actively seek structured environments to maintain their physical fitness and overall well-being. Gyms and fitness centers have therefore become important facilities that provide opportunities for regular exercise, health improvement, and stress management. The decision to join a gym is influenced by several factors, including health awareness, accessibility, affordability, availability of modern equipment, and social influences. Understanding these factors is important for improving fitness participation and promoting healthier lifestyles in urban communities. Therefore, this study aims to examine the key factors influencing individuals to join gyms in urban areas.



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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature highlights several factors influencing individuals to join gyms and participate in fitness-related activities. Various studies indicate that elements such as accessibility, membership cost, quality of equipment, trainer expertise, and facility environment play a significant role in influencing gym selection and participation. Research by Jang et al. (2018) and Ong et al. (2021) emphasizes that modern equipment, service quality, and flexible operating hours are important determinants in attracting gym members. Other studies also suggest that affordability and convenience strongly affect individuals' willingness to join fitness centers, particularly in urban areas where busy lifestyles influence fitness behavior. Research findings further reveal that health improvement, physical appearance, and weight management are major motivations for gym participation. Studies by Riseth et al. (2019) and Vuckovic et al. (2024) indicate that individuals are often motivated by goals such as improving overall health, building muscle, and managing body weight. Additional research also highlights the influence of demographic factors, social pressure, and peer groups on gym membership decisions.

Accessibility to fitness centers within residential neighborhoods and the availability of supportive environments have also been shown to increase participation rates.

Overall, the literature suggests that gym participation is influenced by a combination of health motivations, social influences, accessibility, and service quality. However, many existing studies focus mainly on specific motivational factors or service attributes without fully examining the broader impact of urban lifestyle patterns and sedentary work environments on gym membership decisions. Therefore, there is a need for more comprehensive research that integrates demographic, lifestyle, and environmental factors to better understand the determinants of gym participation in urban areas.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the factors influencing people to join gyms in urban areas. A quantitative approach is used, with primary data collected through a structured questionnaire from urban respondents. The collected data is analyzed using statistical tools such as percentage analysis, ranking analysis, and ANOVA to identify key factors affecting gym membership decisions.

3.2 DATA SOURCE

The study uses both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire from respondents in urban areas. Secondary data is obtained from research journals, articles, websites, reports, and previous studies related to gym participation and urban fitness behavior.

3.3 TOOLS USED

- 3.3.1 **Percentage Analysis** – To determine the proportion of respondents influenced by different factors.
- 3.3.2 **Ranking Analysis** - Used to identify the most important factor influencing people to join a gym.
- 3.3.3 **ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)** – To identify significant differences among groups (e.g., age groups or income levels) regarding gym joining motivations.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample size for this study consists of 52 respondents. The respondents were selected from individuals living in urban areas, including gym members and people interested in fitness activities. The selected sample helps in analyzing the factors influencing individuals to join gyms in urban environments.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study shows that the majority of respondents are young adults aged 18–24, with students forming the largest group of gym participants. Health improvement and muscle gain are the main fitness goals among respondents. Most individuals exercise 1–2 times per week, indicating moderate participation in gym activities.

The findings reveal that quality of equipment and affordable membership fees are the most important factors



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influencing gym membership decisions. At the same time, time constraints and high membership costs are the major barriers preventing individuals from joining gyms. Promotional strategies such as discount offers and nutrition advice also encourage participation.

The ANOVA results indicate no significant difference among motivational, promotional, and psychological factors, suggesting that gym membership decisions are influenced by multiple interconnected factors rather than a single dominant factor.

4.1 TABLE SHOWS PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS

S. No	Variable / Indicator	Category with Highest Response	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	59.6
2	Age Group	18–24 years	78.8
3	Occupation	Student	55.8
4	Monthly Household Income	Under ₹20,000	44.2
5	Gym Membership	Yes	84.6
6	Exercise Frequency per Week	1–2 Times	44.2
7	Primary Fitness Goal	Improve Health	48.1
8	Preferred Time for Exercise	Morning (5–9 AM)	50.0
9	Most Influencing Factor to Join Gym	Variety and Quality of Equipment	42.3
10	Main Barrier to Joining Gym	Time Constraints	46.2
11	Feature Encouraging Gym Membership	Discounts for RURA Commuters	40.4

INTERPRETATION: The table indicates that the majority of respondents are male (59.6%) and belong to the 18–24 age group (78.8%), with students (55.8%) forming the largest occupational category. Most respondents come from households earning below ₹20,000 per month (44.2%), and a large proportion (84.6%) currently have gym memberships. The most common exercise frequency is 1–2 times per week (44.2%), and the primary fitness goal is improving health (48.1%). Most respondents prefer working out in the morning (50%). The variety and quality of equipment (42.3%) is the most influential factor for joining a gym, while time constraints (46.2%) act as the main barrier. Additionally, discount offers (40.4%) are the most encouraging feature for motivating gym membership.

4.2 TABLE SHOWS RANKING ANALYSIS ON USAGE OF HEALTH APPS/INTEGRATION OR TECH FEATURES

Rating	Frequency	Rating × Frequency
1	15	15
2	14	28



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3	16	48
4	3	12
5	4	20
Total	52	123

INTERPRETATION: The table indicates that the majority of respondents are male (59.6%) and belong to the 18–24 age group (78.8%), with students (55.8%) forming the largest occupational category. Most respondents come from households earning below ₹20,000 per month (44.2%), and a large proportion (84.6%) currently have gym memberships. The most common exercise frequency is 1–2 times per week (44.2%), and the primary fitness goal is improving health (48.1%). Most respondents prefer working out in the morning (50%). The variety and quality of equipment (42.3%) is the most influential factor for joining a gym, while time constraints (46.2%) act as the main barrier. Additionally, discount offers (40.4%) are the most encouraging feature for motivating gym membership.

4.3 TABLE SHOWS ANOVA: TWO WAY FACTOR (TEST 1)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	F-value	p-value
Factor (Motivation Type)	~0.00	3	0.00	1.000
Response Category	158.80	4	1.94	0.169
Error	246.00	12	—	—

INTERPRETATION: $p = 1.000 (> 0.05)$ There is no significant difference between the four motivation factors based on frequency distribution. This means respondents reacted similarly across different motivational statements. Therefore, the calculated p-values were greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypotheses, indicating no statistically significant difference.

V. CONCLUSION

The analysis reveals that gym participation in urban areas is predominantly driven by young adults, particularly students aged 18–24 years, who form the core demographic. Most respondents already hold gym memberships, though engagement remains moderate, with many exercising only 1–2 times per week due to competing priorities. Primary motivations for joining include health improvement, muscle gain, and enhanced physical stamina, aligning with urban lifestyle demands.

Key factors influencing gym choice emphasize practical needs: availability of modern equipment, affordable membership fees, clean and safe environments, and convenient locations. However, significant barriers persist, notably time constraints from work/study schedules and high membership costs, which deter consistent attendance. Promotional elements like discount offers, free trials, nutrition guidance, and personalized training further sway decisions positively. Overall, urban gym participation is shaped by an interplay of rising health awareness, accessibility, affordability, promotional incentives, and lifestyle convenience, rather than any single dominant factor, offering gyms opportunities to tailor strategies for higher retention.



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VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The value of this research lies in its ability to transform how we approach public health in cities. For gym owners and entrepreneurs, it provides a deeper understanding of their members as human beings with specific needs, allowing them to shift from aggressive sales tactics to community-focused service models. For urban planners and policymakers, this study highlights the importance of integrating fitness spaces into the "15-minute city" framework to combat sedentary lifestyles. Ultimately, by identifying the factors that actually get people moving, we can contribute to a decrease in urban health crises like hypertension and isolation, fostering a city culture that prioritizes well-being over constant productivity.

The "Honesty" Factor: Participants might claim they join for "health" when they actually join for "status," leading to slightly biased self-reporting.

Economic Slice: This study primarily focuses on those who can afford memberships, potentially overlooking how lower-income urban residents access fitness.

Geography: The findings in a hyper-dense city like New York or Tokyo might not perfectly translate to a smaller, more spread-out urban area.

VII. FUTURE SCOPE OF STUDY

The present study focuses on factors influencing gym participation among a limited sample of urban respondents. Future research can expand the study by including a larger and more diverse sample size across multiple cities or regions to improve the generalizability of the findings. Further studies may also compare urban and rural fitness behaviour to understand differences in motivations and barriers toward gym participation.

Additionally, future research can explore the impact of digital fitness technologies, such as mobile health applications, wearable devices, and online workout platforms, on gym participation. Longitudinal studies may also be conducted to examine changes in fitness habits, long-term membership retention, and lifestyle transformation resulting from regular gym attendance.

Moreover, future studies can investigate psychological, social, and environmental influences in greater depth, including peer influence, social media trends, and mental health benefits of gym activities. Such research will provide a broader understanding of fitness behavior and help gyms, policymakers, and health organizations develop more effective strategies to promote active and healthy lifestyles.

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