



Interrelationships among the Leisure Involvement, Leisure Benefit, Happiness, and Quality of Life of the Fitness Club Members

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Abstract. This study investigated the fitness club members and conducted a survey by stratified sampling in the northern, central, and southern regions of Taiwan. A total of 1,239 valid questionnaires were collected. The collected data were analyzed by descriptive statistics and partial least squares. The findings were as follows: (1) A higher level of leisure involvement among the fitness club members indicates increased leisure benefits and happiness; (2) the leisure involvement of the fitness club members does not directly impact the quality of their lives; instead, it positively influences their quality of life through leisure benefits and happiness; and (3) the leisure benefits and happiness derived by the fitness club members from fitness activities could improve their quality of life. Based on the above findings, this study not only provided business suggestions for fitness clubs but also clarified the direction of further research.

Keywords: Fitness club; Involvement; Leisure benefit; Happiness; Quality of life

1 Introductions

The growing economy has improved people's living standards, and individuals have started to pay attention to the quality of their life and health. This has led to the rise of the concepts of fitness and exercise. Furthermore, with advancements in modern industrial and commercial society, people are now living in an urbanized and fast-paced work environment. Consequently, the awareness of health among people has been heightened. However, existing sports facilities are not adequate to meet people's demands. In response, the fitness industry has taken form. To meet the rising public demand for fitness, fitness clubs have not only provided convenient and safe indoor spaces and facilities but also offered guidance and instructions regarding fitness activities and aerobic classes. This has made fitness clubs a favored spot for urban residents.

Operating in a highly service-oriented industry, fitness clubs make every effort to meet consumers' demands, thereby improving their lives through exercise. This requires fitness clubs to gain a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in order to deliver superior services and plan targeted marketing strategies. Leisure involvement

has emerged as an important variable in leisure involvement-related studies [1]. Prior studies on leisure sports suggested that leisure involvement influences post-participation behaviors [2]. Wicker and Thormann (2022) found that, according to the exercise behavior of the people participating in fitness activities, involvement and leisure benefits are conducive to enhancing people's physical, psychological, social, and leisure demands [3].

According to relevant studies, ongoing participation in leisure sports yields leisure benefits for the participants [4]. In terms of exercise and fitness, studies have indicated that consumers exercising at fitness clubs can reap both physical and psychological benefits, such as facilitating fatigue recovery, boosting metabolism, and enhancing daily routines [5]. Furthermore, according to these studies, regular exercise boosts personal happiness [6] and improves the quality of people's lives [7]. Additionally, those who exercise at fitness clubs tend to perceive improvements in both their physical and psychological health after exercise, leading to enhanced life satisfaction, positive emotions, and a sense of self-fulfillment [3]. Considering that the level of involvement is a key variable in the study of consumer behaviors in the fitness industry [1], this study focused on analyzing the leisure involvement of fitness club members and explored the interrelationships among leisure benefits, happiness, and quality of life. The goal was to provide insights for fitness clubs into member behaviors and corresponding business management strategies. Hence, six hypotheses were proposed:

H1: The leisure involvement of fitness club members positively influences their leisure benefits.

H2: The leisure involvement of fitness club members positively influences their happiness.

H3: The leisure involvement of fitness club members positively influences the quality of their lives.

H4: The leisure benefits reaped by fitness club members positively influence their happiness.

H5: The leisure benefits reaped by fitness club members positively influence the quality of their lives.

H6: The happiness perceived by fitness club members positively influences the quality of their lives.

2 Research Method

2.1 Research Subjects and Sampling

This study investigated the members of fitness clubs. A questionnaire survey was conducted via convenience sampling from January to the end of March 2023 at 15 fitness clubs in the northern, central, and southern regions of Taiwan. The subjects were active members that exercised in the fitness clubs. A total of 1,239 valid questionnaires were returned. Among the subjects, 663 were male (53.5%) and 576 were female (46.5%). In terms of marital status, 564 were married (45.5%) and 675 were not married (54.5%). By age group, 471 were from 41 to 50 years old (38%), while the least represented age group comprised those aged 61 and above (42, 3.4%). Regarding educational level,

most had a university education (603, 48.7%), while only 21 had a doctoral degree (1.7%). In terms of occupation, 183 were servicemen, public servants, and teachers (14.8%). Concerning personal monthly income, most of the subjects earned between NTD 60,001 and NTD 80,000 (309, 24.9%).

2.2 Research Scale

The research scale consisted of four sections. Section 1 was the “Scale of Leisure Involvement of Fitness Club Members” (12 items), which assessed the level of involvement of the participants in the fitness activities of fitness clubs. Section 2 was the “Scale of Leisure Benefits Reaped by Fitness Club Members” (18 items), which focused on the physical, psychological, and social benefits obtained by the fitness club members from fitness activities. Section 3 was the “Scale of Happiness of Fitness Club Members” (12 items), which measured the levels of subjective satisfaction and happiness (both psychologically and physically) felt by the fitness club members. Section 4 was the “Scale of the Quality of Life of Fitness Club Members” (20 items), which explored the influence of regular exercise on the quality of life of fitness club members. All sections adopted a five-point Likert scale for scoring, with answers ranging from 5 (*strongly agree*) to 1 (*strongly disagree*). Section 5 investigated the participants’ demographic variables, including their gender, marital status, age, educational level, occupation, and personal monthly income.

2.3 Data Analysis

The statistical analysis of this study included determining the frequency distributions and percentages of the demographic variables, which were used to evaluate the distribution of the demographic variables of fitness club members. In terms of the indicators for reliability and validity measurement, this study employed the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach’s α value, which both required a value of .70 or higher [8]. In terms of the validity, the convergent validity of each latent variable was determined by checking whether the average variance extracted (AVE) of each observed variable was equal to or greater than .50. Regarding the analysis of the structural relationship of the model, this study focused on two aspects as suggested by Hair et al. (2010) [9]: (1) determining whether the standardized path coefficients were statistically significant; and (2) using R^2 to evaluate the explanatory power of the model.

3 Results Analysis

3.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The analysis results presented in Table 1 indicated that the CR values of all four latent variables in this study exceeded .70, as did their Cronbach’s α values. Therefore, the scales in this study all exhibited robust reliability. As for the validity, according to the

analysis results, the AVE value of each observed variable was above .50, suggesting excellent convergent validity of the scales.

Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis results

Latent variables/Measure index	CR	α	AVE
Leisure involvement	.94	.91	.85
Leisure benefit	.93	.89	.83
Happiness	.77	.76	.58
Quality of life	.94	.92	.80

Source: this study.

3.2 Hypothesis Validation

This study conducted structural model testing, and the results of the structural equation model are presented in Figure 1. The path coefficients in the figure represent standardized regression coefficients (β values). In terms of the relationships between variables, leisure involvement positively influenced leisure benefit ($\beta = .71$, $p < .01$) and happiness ($\beta = .34$, $p < .01$). However, leisure involvement did not have a direct effect on quality of life ($\beta = .00$, $p = .05$). Additionally, leisure benefit positively influenced happiness ($\beta = .45$, $p < .01$) and quality of life ($\beta = .09$, $p < .01$), and happiness positively influenced quality of life ($\beta = .73$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, upon further analysis of the relationships between variables, the explanatory power of leisure involvement on leisure benefit was 50% and that it is 53% on happiness through leisure benefit. Furthermore, the explanatory power of leisure involvement on quality of life through leisure benefit and happiness was 63%.

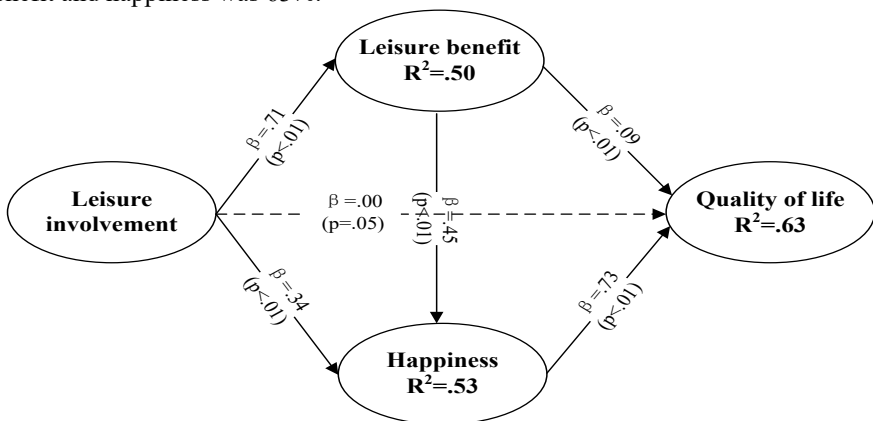


Fig. 1. Diagram of the structural model (source: this study)

The R^2 value signifies a model's predictive power. Specifically, the predictive power of leisure involvement on leisure benefit was 50%, and it was 53% on happiness

through leisure benefit. Additionally, the predictive power of leisure benefit and happiness on quality of life was 63%. According to prior related studies, six hypotheses were established in this study. Five of these hypotheses were substantiated, and the remaining hypothesis, H3, was not supported because leisure involvement did not directly influence quality of life. The details are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Test results of the structural equation model for research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path coefficients(β)	Test result	Test result
H1: The leisure involvement of fitness club members positively influences their leisure benefits.	.71	$p<.01$	Supported
H2: The leisure involvement of fitness club members positively influences their happiness.	.34	$p<.01$	Supported
H3: The leisure involvement of fitness club members positively influences the quality of their lives.	.00	$p=.05$	Not supported
H4: The leisure benefits reaped by fitness club members positively influence their happiness.	.45	$p<.01$	Supported
H5: The leisure benefits reaped by fitness club members positively influence the quality of their lives.	.09	$p<.01$	Supported
H6: The happiness perceived by fitness club members positively influences the quality of their lives.	.73	$p<.01$	Supported

4 Conclusion and Suggestions

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the empirical analysis, this study reached a number of conclusions. First, when the level of leisure involvement among the fitness club members is high, they will obtain greater physical, psychological, and social benefits. Accordingly, their life satisfaction and positive emotions will be enhanced, and their negative emotions will be mitigated. Second, the leisure involvement of the fitness club members does not directly influence the quality of their lives; instead, it yields a positive influence through leisure benefits and happiness. Third, the leisure benefits and happiness reaped by consumers from fitness activities at fitness clubs help enhance and improve the quality of their lives.

4.2 Suggestions

The findings of this study indicated that involvement in fitness activities not only brings leisure benefits but also boosts happiness and improves quality of life. Therefore, in addition to providing consumers with an opportunity for self-assessment of their respective physical improvements, fitness clubs should consider offering additional health-related consultations to help members understand that if they join the club and

exercise there more frequently, they will experience significant improvements in both their physical and psychological health. Additionally, fitness clubs are recommended to offer their members suggestions on how to improve the quality of their lives, thereby convincing their members that they have made the right decision to join the club and exercise there.

Those who have never joined a fitness club may not be aware of the services typically offered by fitness clubs and may have concerns about the cost. In this regard, fitness clubs should make themselves fully understood in their marketing efforts. When potential consumers show their interest, fitness clubs, in addition to explaining the leisure benefits consumers can derive from fitness activities, should highlight the enhanced life satisfaction, positive emotions, and mitigated negative emotions that consumers will derive from exercise. Moreover, the significant improvements in physical, psychological, social, and environmental well-being that accompany frequent involvement in fitness activities should be clarified. Additionally, fitness clubs should address the concerns of potential consumers over costs, thereby avoiding their doubts and maintaining their willingness to make a purchase.

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