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# Factors that Influence People's Choices Toward Gyms

**Shuyi Ying**

**RDFZ Xishan School, Beijing 10000, China.**

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, China has entered the post-pandemic. The gyms have reopened and are marketing to bring in new customers, and accommodations for the new development of these health services have quickly progressed. The researcher designed this survey to understand members' current needs and preferences for gyms to provide suggestions for the future development of the gym industry in China. In this study, which lasted from July 21 to July 23, 115 respondents (aged 18 and above) in China were asked to complete a 12-question survey about their knowledge of the gym, the feelings about using the gyms, and the factors that they think will affect their choices about gyms. The researcher searched journals and data online about recent Post-COVID gym and fitness policies, the history of gyms, and development of US gyms. All the materials lead to the results and conclusions, which were reviewed using comparative analysis.

**Keywords:** Fitness; Health Services; Gym in China

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## 1. Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses faced economic crisis, and were forced to stop production or temporarily close their doors. Now, the situation in China is improving, and people are going out looking for entertainment and to resume their daily activities. Most notably, after many months indoors, people began paying more attention to their physical health. Gyms opened again to provide a good environment for people who have not been able to regularly exercise for a long time. In order for gyms to better meet people's needs and to adapt to the growing demand for exercise spaces, the researcher hopes to understand people's current needs and preferences for gyms to provide suggestions for the future development of the gym industry in China.

There are many articles predict post-pandemic gym recovery models, and experts expect that the fitness industry will not only receive more and more attention and respond to the call of the national policies, but will also become a more international industry in China. One interview from Sohu, published by the CFC fitness conference account, examines the conference around the post-pandemic survival and development of gyms. Their main point is to face the negative impact of the pandemic with a positive attitude, constantly adjust strategies, such as online courses and live streaming (CFC fitness conference, 2020). Also, another article discusses the global action plan on physical activities (I. 2021). The goal of this plan is to achieve a 15% reforming in global physical activity by 2030. The main content of the plan is based on IHRSA's participation in the WHO dialogue, Fiona Bull's global perspective on the current state of global physical activity, and the findings of various research teams. The ultimate goal of this project is to publish a scientific global document, guidelines, and tools to lead the fitness industry into a Post-Covid world.

Other factors that impact gym membership numbers are the innovation and development of fitness equipment. The first reading shows, in 1835, Gustav Zander first invented the gym and fitness equipment, but the concept was very different from modern equipment, and their purpose was mainly to move joints, and aid in muscle contraction. Then, over time, gyms served the sedentary upper class. In modern times, gyms are gradually associated with bodybuilding and fitness competitions, so that the fitness industry gradually became commercialized (Zhihu 2020). After talking the general gyms' development, another material mainly talks about the original meaning and establishment intention of the word gym, and the process of

different gyms from training specific groups (boxers, etc.) to chain stores for the public, and there are continuous innovations. For example, after the 2008 Olympic Games, China set up outdoor fitness places (Hmar, R, 2020).

When examining the development of US gyms, there are lots of new ideology which is totally different than, but important for Chinese fitness centers (Miller, 2021). The worker summarized 12 gyms that are popular and introduced their similarities and differences. Different features that have emerged in many brands, from a design perspective include three points: it's usually membership-based (month-pay); most successful gyms are franchises; focus on nutrition coaching and fitness, also, the physical to psychological. China has different business models and industry pursuits than the United States, and each country has very different lifestyles and ideologies. Chinese gyms are more oriented to profit. Before the pandemic, the national health consciousness was not very strong, so the fitness industry has not set off a boom in China (YuTangTiYu, 2017).

By examining the factors that people find appealing in gyms and fitness centers, the researcher hopes to find useful data that gyms can use to increase membership numbers and gain profits in a post-pandemic China.

## **2. Methodology**

To conduct this research, the researcher searched for the sources online and found the most recently data from website. To get the up-to-date, authentic first-hand resources, the researcher created an online survey. The population surveyed was adults (aged 18 and above). The survey was distributed via the internet, using the internet platform, WeChat, QQ and lasted for two days from July 19 to July 21. Most of the respondents were citizens between the age of 41 to 50.

There were 12 questions in the questionnaire. Questions included demographic information including gender and age; additional questions asked how often participants go to the gyms, how long they usually stay there, what kind of the possible factors that may influence their choice of gyms, and their opinions of different payment models of these gyms.

Ultimately, 115 answers were collected and further analyzed to provide data for the research. The final conclusion was reached through comparative analysis.

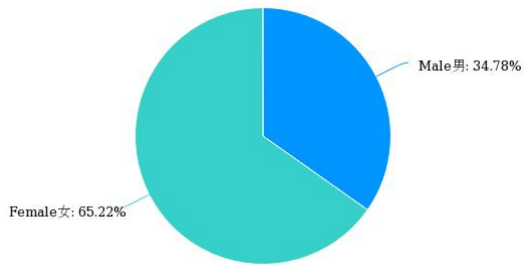
## **3. Results**

Three unexpected outcomes were shown in the data collected: the times that people go the gyms each week, the comparison of times that people go to the gyms every week, and the location of the gyms. These results not only reflect and reveal the reality of attitudes toward fitness but also, to some extent, the social differences in society and emphasis on physical exercise.

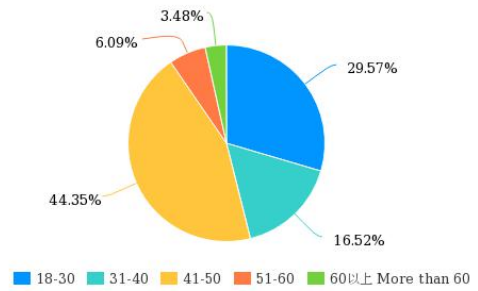
### **3.1 Participant Distributions**

In total, the researcher gathered 115 responses for analysis. Among the participants, 34.78% of them are male while 65.22% of them are females; middle-aged people provided the largest population in this research, 29.57% of respondents were between 18 to 30, 16.52% of respondents were between 31 to 40, 44.35% of respondents were between 41 to 50, 6.09% of respondents were between 51 to 60, and 3.48% of respondents were age 60 and above.

#### **Fitness status quo**

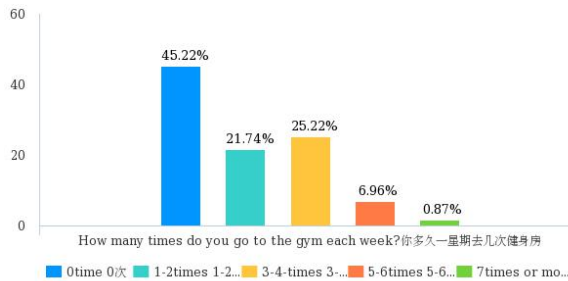


**Figure 1**

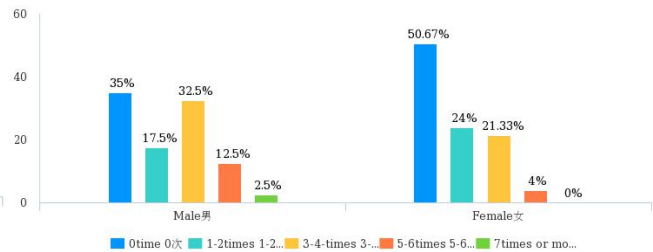


**Figure 2**

**Figure 1 and 2 shows the distribution of age and gender of respondents**



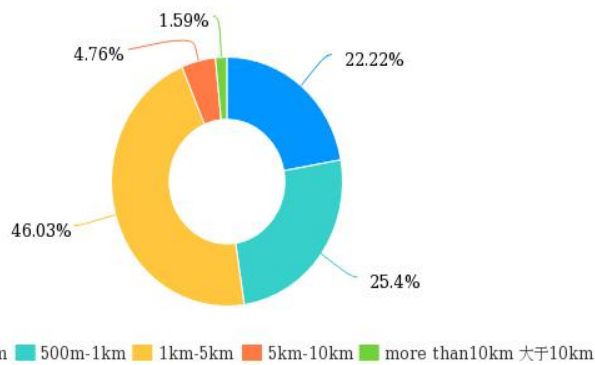
**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**

According to the Figure 3, nearly 45% never went to the gyms before, and as the figure 4 shows, most of them are female. Also, female who go to the gyms will generally spend less time there than males.

Question 4 in the survey asked “How far the gyms which you usually go from your home or office?” 29 responses state their facilities are about 1-5 kilometers away, while 30 responses state it’s about 0-1 kilometers, which means the gyms that they usually participate are close to their homes or offices.



**Figure 5**

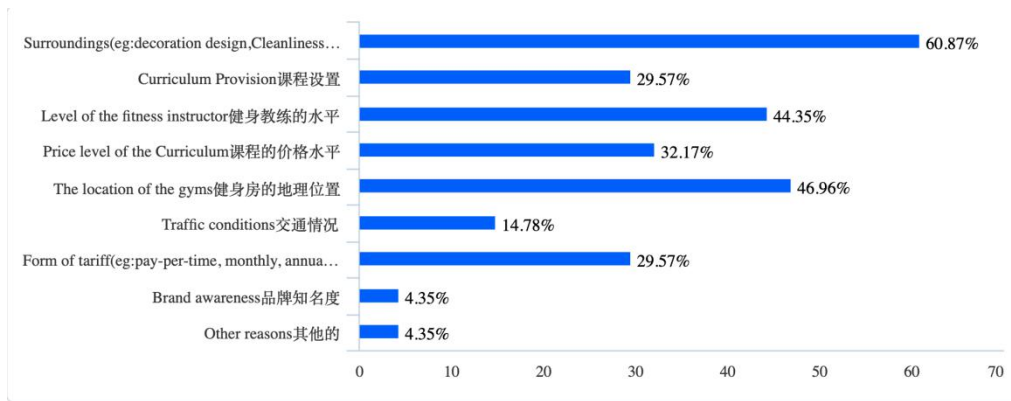


Figure 6

5.What will affect your selection when choosing a gym?Rank your top 3 that you agree. 1 being your favorite.如果要选择健身房去健身,什么方面会影响你的选择?选择其中3个你认为必要的,1是最必要的---选项详情

搜索答案文本  搜索  关键词分析   过滤空选项

序号	提交答卷时间	答案文本	查看答卷
20	7月19日 17:33	器械种类	<a href="#">查看答卷</a>
44	7月19日 18:04	年卡	<a href="#">查看答卷</a>
49	7月19日 18:30	器械全面性	<a href="#">查看答卷</a>
61	7月19日 19:12	想锻炼	<a href="#">查看答卷</a>
67	7月19日 19:47	Exercise yourself	<a href="#">查看答卷</a>

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Figure 7

Question 5 asked “What will affect your selection when choosing a gym?” The top 3 factors are surroundings in the gyms (60.87%), locations of the gyms (46.96%), and the level of the fitness instructors in the gyms (44.35%). Besides the factors in Figure 6, some participants also mentioned the types and diversity of equipment, as Figure 7 shows.

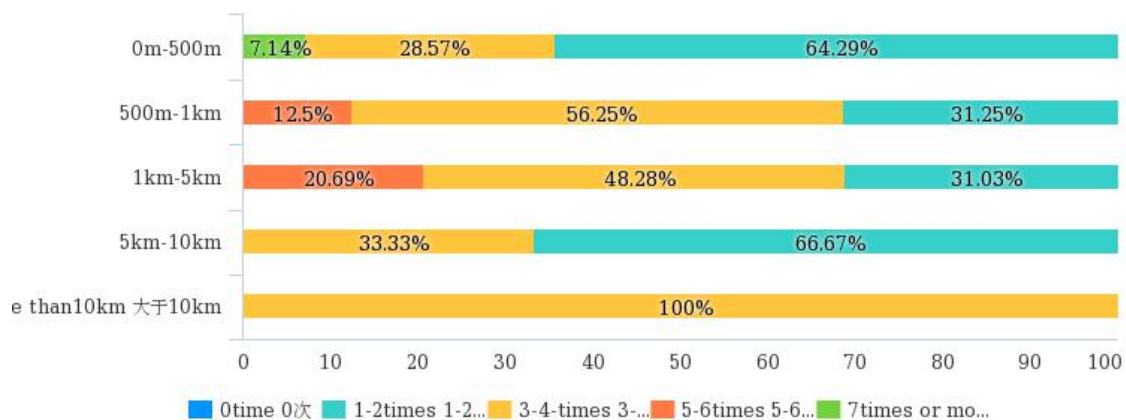
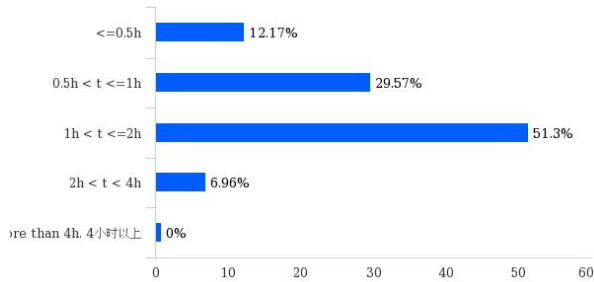


Figure 8

Thus, Figure 8 shows the comparison between the results questions of 5 with 6. Surprisingly, ignoring the data which the distance is more than 10 kilometers, when the gyms are about 0 m to 500 m or 5 km to 10 km, the results are nearly the same—people go there for 1-2 times a week and no-one go there for 5-6 times. When the gyms are about 500 m to 1 km or 1 km to 5 km, people go there for 3-4 times per week or 5-6 times; the gyms that people visit 7 times or more are only 0-500m away from their homes or offices. Generally, the closer a gym is, the more times people go there.

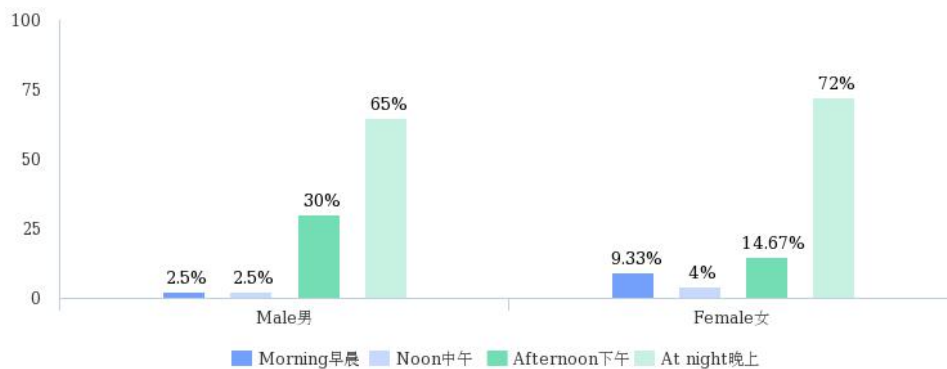


**Figure 9**

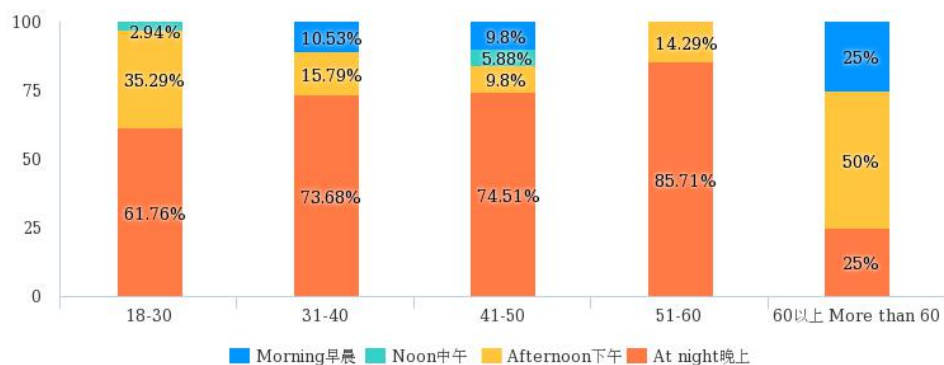


**Figure 10**

Question 11 asks “How long will you spend in the gyms?” The result shows in Figure 9, most of the people spend 1 to 2 hours in the gyms and no one spend there for more than 4 hours. Comparing the times that spend there with the gender. Obviously from Figure 10, the graph is similar with Figure 9. More females are willing to spend 1 to 2 hours (56%) than male(42.5%) do in the gyms. In other selections, males are always more than females.



**Figure 11**



**Figure 12**

Question 12 asks “When do you usually go to the gyms?”, and researcher parallel age and gender with the results of question 12. It shows that most people prefer to go to the gyms at night, females prefer to go in the morning, and males prefer to go in the afternoon. Surprisingly, the conclusion that the age between 18 or 30 and 51-60 do not go to the gyms in the morning, the senior citizens who are older than 60 are partial to go in the afternoon. All these results are clearly demonstrated by Figure 11 and 12.



**Figure 13**

**Figure 14**

According to the comment that SUPERMONKEY’s official account on Zhihu which answering questions about pay-per-view, it points out in 20134, they pioneered the pay-per-time strategy, then use it to compete with other branches (SUPERMONKEY, 2018). Nowadays, many gyms launch this kind of payment method (ChengDu, 2020). Although when a model is no longer reasonable, a new model will inevitably appear, such as SUPERMONKEY, JJfitness, Shape, and COMEONPANDA (YuTangTiYu, 2017). Pay-per-view brings convenience and benefits to businesses, but people are not very familiar with or agree with it. As Figure 13 shows, 61.74% still identify with paying for the monthly/annual card. From Figure 14, 75.65% of people haven’t heard of gyms that featured pay-per-view.

## Conclusion

The results and the data reveal when people are more willing to go to the gyms and how this information varies among genders and ages. From the results of the above survey, fitness culture is more popular amount 18 to 30 and 41-50. People attend gyms for different purposes; perhaps young men are more likely to follow the social trend, and attain a more muscular physique. However, the group of people aged 41-50, they start to pay attention to their health, and do exercise by going to the gym.

Although the data shows that half of people do not go to the gyms and only know limited information about different gym branches, most respondents who attend gyms were females. Maybe women's pursuit of muscle and line is not as strong as men's, but they more focused on their weight. Fitness is also regarded as a male activity, and the history of gyms has influenced this idea. Ruth Hmar (2020) wrote that, “gyms were usually a locality for the education of young men, which included physical education and bathing and studying” (Para. 1). The researcher assumes that the development of gyms in China require more advertisement and the branches’ operators should create innovative and neoteric operating strategies. Or, fitness center development should refer to such as the United States and other European fitness developed countries business concept and development concept, such as identity reconstruction, interaction and community (JC Herz. 2014). Or, gyms could globalize and homogenize (Dworkin & Wachs, 2009). Ultimately, gyms should use more surveys and resources to compare and analyze the preferences of their members.

From the survey, it proves that the closer the gyms are, more often people will go, which means that gyms can receive more profits from members. However, some of the gyms still choose to open in commercial complexes, like malls, in the city instead of residential and office areas. There, gyms will face higher rents and lower prices, and the cost of living will be high. That's a question that researcher hasn't solved yet: Why would gym operators make this different choice?

Utilizing the data, operators of the gyms can create more morning services for people aged 31-50 and older than 60 years-old, because they usually go in the morning. Also, they should also add more classes and more courses for females at night, because large number of people go to the gyms at night, and females report going to the gym more than males. Maybe, gyms can shorten the length of some courses which are more than 4 hours and lengthen the classes which are less than two hour, because the largest percentage of respondents want to spend one to two hours in the gyms (51.3%). When managers want to build a new store, try to find the place that is close to the residential or office areas. Above all, gym managers can use this data to improve their membership numbers and offer better services to their current users.

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## Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

1. What's your gender? [Male][Female]
2. How old are you? [18-30][31-40][41-50][51-60][More than 60]
3. How many times do you go to the gym each week? [0time][1-2times ][3-4 times][5-6times ][7times or more7]
4. How far the gyms from your home or office? [0m-500m][500m-1km][1km-5km][5km-10km][more than10km]
5. What will affect your selection when choosing a gym? Rank top 3 that you agree. 1 being your favorite.  
[Surroundings][Curriculum Provision][Level of the fitness instructor][Price level of the Curriculum][The location of the gyms][Traffic conditions][Form of tariff(eg:pay-per-time, monthly, annual card)][Brand awareness][Other reasons]
6. Nowadays, there are different kinds of ways to pay the gyms(pay-per-time, monthly/annual card)? Do you prefer a pay-per-time(short-term) or a monthly/ annual card (long-term)?[pay-per-time(short-term)][monthly/annual card(long-term)]
7. Have you ever heard some of the names of gyms below?  
[SUPERMONKEY][JJfitness][Shape][COMEONPANDA][None]
8. Do you have a gym membership (monthly/annual card)?[pay-per time] [seasonal][annual]
9. How much would you prefer to pay for your membership? [pay-per-time 69-159 yuan (depending on the Curriculum)][A monthly card of 300 yuan, personal card, which can be used for unlimited times within the validity period][A annual card of 1000-3000 yuan, personal card, which can be used for unlimited times within the validity period]
10. How many hours (t) will you spend in the gyms? [ $\leq 0.5h$ ][ $0.5h < t \leq 1h$ ][ $1h < t \leq 2h$ ][ $2h < t < 4h$ ][more than 4h]
11. When do you usually go to the gyms?[Morning][Noon][Afternoon][At night]