

**SENSORY MARKETING IN HEALTH CLUBS**

Importance of the senses in acquisition, retention and cancellation of memberships

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## Abstract

The number of health clubs in Portugal have been growing over the years. However, this growth leads to more market competition and less opportunities to differentiate the services provided.

The sensorial marketing has increasingly been used in services to create a different experience for consumers. Here, we present a marketing strategy to determine if a sensorial approach can be relevant in the acquisition, retention and cancelation of memberships in health clubs.

To accomplish this objective two research strategies were carried out, one focused on the concepts from relevant literature and another one on empirical research, through quantitative method, questionnaire.

From the empirical research, three groups of respondents depending on the health club situation were formed – are enrolled, were enrolled but are not anymore and never been enrolled.

Our findings suggested that senses' relevancy is correlated with age but not with gender. Moreover, and according to respondents who are enrolled, senses are not statically related to the frequency of members go to the health club, as well as, not being a cancellation factor.

Regarding respondent's opinion about senses, smell and touch are the most and least important ones for consumers in health clubs, respectively. Furthermore, and regardless the group, not smelling from sweat and smelling from sweat are the stimuli that positively and negatively influence respondent's perception of health clubs, respectively.

Overall the results show that this strategy could positively influence the perception and experience in the health club but is not a decisive factor to choose.

**Keywords:** Sensory marketing, Health club Memberships, Fitness industry and Decision making

### **JEL classification system**

M31 – Marketing

Z21 – Sports Economics: Industry Studies

## Resumo

O número de health clubs em Portugal tem aumentado nos últimos anos. Este crescimento leva a uma maior competitividade no mercado e menos oportunidades para diferenciar o serviço prestado.

O marketing sensorial tem sido cada vez mais utilizado em serviços, para criar uma experiência diferente para os consumidores. Através da pesquisa desenvolvida e recolha de informação, propomos uma estratégia de marketing para determinar o grau de relevância de uma abordagem sensorial na aquisição, retenção e cancelamento de inscrições em health clubs.

Para tal, duas abordagens de pesquisa, uma focada em conceitos pertinentes da literatura, outra numa pesquisa empírica, através de método quantitativo, questionário.

Do estudo empírico, três grupos de respondentes foram formados, dependendo da situação no health club – está inscrito, já esteve inscrito e nunca esteve.

As principais conclusões sugerem que a relevância dos sentidos está correlacionada com a idade, mas não com o sexo do respondente. Além disso, de acordo com os que estão inscritos, estatisticamente não existe uma relação entre os sentidos e a frequência com que frequenta o health club, não influenciando um eventual cancelamento.

Em relação à opinião sobre os sentidos, o olfato e o tato são considerados respetivamente o mais e o menos importante. Além disso, independentemente do grupo, não cheirar a suor e o cheiro a suor, são os estímulos que influenciam positiva e negativamente a perceção dos respondentes.

Concluindo, os resultados mostram que esta estratégia pode influenciar positivamente a perceção e a experiência no health club, não sendo, contudo, um fator decisório.

**Palavras-chave:** Marketing sensorial, Inscrições em health clubs, Indústria do fitness e Tomada de decisão

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## List of abbreviation

AMA – American Marketing Association

AGAP – Association of Portuguese Companies of Gyms and Academies

EHFA – European Health and Fitness Association

IMI – Imposto Municipal sobre Imóveis

## **1 | Introduction**

The aim of the present research is to evaluate the influence of sensory stimuli strategies developed by health clubs during three stages of the membership: i) the acquisition, ii) retention and iii) cancellation. In introduction, a brief presentation about the topic will be provided, as well as, the research problem and the objectives proposed to be achieved during this study.

### **1.1 | Theme**

According to the European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA), the fitness industry in Europe is growing. In 2017, a growth of 3.2% in the number of health clubs licensed in this continent adding to an increase of 4% in the number of new members were registered (Deloitte, 2018).

Concerning the Portuguese market, in 2016 approximately 1.5 million people have a fitness club membership, corresponding to 15,8% of the population (Grupo marketest, 2016).

Nonetheless, in 2014 the number was only 14.2%, representing an increase of 1.6% in just two years. This historic boom has been driven by a number of important and potential unexpected factors, the key element is the increase number of health clubs, just in Portugal there are 1100 health clubs (AGAP, 2016), offering a wide variety of services, such as budget-friendly health clubs and streaming exercises classes.

The EHFA pointed out a few more reasons for this growth, as more flexibility and personalization of the services, the development of technologies that helped promote and facilitate the access to those services, as well as, the specialization of professionals from the area (Technogym, s.d).

Despite this increase interest, fitness industry can take advantage of a well-studied and largely applied strategy, which is the use of the five senses to attract and retain customers. By developing certain stimuli inside the health club, it is possible to manipulate the experience provided, shaping the reactions in the human brain, ultimately influence consumers decisions.

Several authors, as Agapito, Almeida, Mendes & Vale, 2014; Mesquita, 2016; Ribeiro, 2016; Vaz, 2017, presented studies demonstrating how the five senses could add

value to services in different industry areas. In all cases the objective was to identify if the stimuli developed could be a relevant factor when acquiring and retaining customers.

In this context, the focus of the study will be to evaluate if the senses could be a persuading factor in three stages: i) at the acquisition, ii) at the retention and iii) at terminating memberships in health clubs. In order to achieve this, several subjects will be considered, such as: sensorial and sports marketing, the decision-making process, the senses and stages from the consumer life cycle, as acquisition, retention and cancellation.

## **1.2 | Research Problem**

Many have been the strategies developed and applied by marketers in health clubs to attract, retain and avoid cancellation from their members, but not all result and many are obsolete.

As previously said, there are around 1.5 million people (Marktest, 2016) enrolled in one of the 1100 clubs (AGAP, 2016), with so many options in the market it is difficult for the consumers to decide which one better matches their needs, so marketers need to figure out what are the expectations to be fulfilled (Keiningham, Rust & Zahorik, 1995; Rocha, 2017) and how to do it.

Besides consumers expectations, managers also need to be concerned about the other players in the market and in finding ways to promote and differentiate their club from the competitors.

To overcome the competition, health clubs must develop strategies to create competitive advantages (Oliveira, 2013), which according to Barney e Hesterly (2011; Caldeira & Nunes, 2016) is something that adds value, is not very common, hard to be reproduced and increases profitability of the service provided.

So, in a market with so many competitors, where services are so similar, how can one stand out from the rest?

One strategy health clubs can use to increase the uniqueness of their services in the market is through the experience provided. The way services are performed is something that characterizes them and makes it easier for consumers to associate a particular feature to a brand.

This experience should culminate in a pleasant and memorable moment for the consumer, something that he/she feels is worth coming back for (Chais, Machado, Milan, Scopel & Tibola, 2013). It is easier to persuade a consumer to return for an experience he/she considered unforgettable than for an ordinary one.

Having this in mind, what if a health club starts using a strategy based on sensory marketing, which according to Chais, Machado, Milan, Scopel & Tibola (2013: 2) “*aims at capturing the attention of the five senses of the consumer and thereby creating a sensory experience capable of differentiate brands, motivate and add value in consumers mind*”, i.e., use the senses, in this case only four of them, to manipulate consumers experience making it more encouraging to come back.

Several have been the industries in which this approach has already been implemented and all showed positive results, demonstrating the importance of simple aspects such as the design of the space, the smells or even textures, can have in the success of a business as spas, banks or shops.

### 1.3 | Objectives

The fundamental point of this dissertation, as previously said, is to evaluate whether the five senses could be an influencing factor in consumers’ decisions or not. More specifically, if the development and subsequent implementation of a series of stimuli are able to persuade consumers to join or stay in that health club or on the other hand be a reason to terminate the contract.

Therefore, a set of stimuli are defined as the most relevant ones present in the day-to-day experience of a customer in a health club, for this reason only four out of the five senses will be included in the study, the focus will be on smell, sound, vision and touch, enabling the creation of stimuli as **music, noise pollution, smells as sweat, cleanings (bleach) or air freshener spray, design, colour, room layout, outside scenery and texture of machine.**

The main purpose will be to assess the importance given to the senses, perceive if they are a factor that manipulates consumers decision, which ones are more important for each consumer status and if they could be a motive for terminating the contract.

As a result of this study it will be possible to provide information to the executives about the influence that senses may have in health clubs, which ones are identified as

being more relevant and how can they become a competitive advantage against the competitors.

## **1.4 | Structure**

This dissertation will be divided into 4 chapters.

In order to provide a better comprehension of the subject, the first chapter will be the Literature Review, in which the most theoretical topics will be explored. The main topics will include: i) the fitness industry; ii) the power of brands in fitness; iii) the importance of location for health clubs; iv) sports and sensory marketing; v) the senses; vi) the decision-making process; vii) the acquisition, retention and cancellation of memberships; and viii) some examples from other industries, as financial, tourism, automotive and health, which will demonstrate how they took advantage of the senses to improve the services provided.

The second chapter corresponds to the methodology, which will describe the whole process regarding information gathering, as well as the tools used. It will be divided into two sections, i) secondary data, in which are included the points that will guide the data analysis and ii) primary data.

The third chapter will be Results and Discussion, it begins by explaining how the data analysis will be processed, starting by characterizing the sample followed by the points presented in the methodology section.

To finish, the fourth chapter will be divided in four parts: Conclusions, Limitations, Implications and Future research. This section is a summary of the main findings of the study, as well as marketing insights and suggestions for new research topics.

## 2 | Literature Review

### 2.1 | Fitness

*“The phenomenon of physical exercises, commonly defined as “fitness””* (Bianco & Poali, 2015: 602) *“means more than just being fit”* (Stokvis & van Hilvoorde, 2013: 513), it represents a dream of achieving complete health, where the body became a differentiation point, its own costume, nowadays the fashion is called fitness (de Wachter 1984; Stokvis & van Hilvoorde, 2013).

According to several authors, fitness is not just a behaviour, is a state (Rocha, 2017), physical exercise is seen as an exit for the problems caused by the modern lifestyle, such as accumulated stress, sedentary lifestyle, inadequate nutrition and even addictions as smoking and alcohol (Saba, 2000; Rocha, 2017). Some authors define fitness as a way of striving for achieving a good physical condition; as well as increase energy (Stokvis & van Hilvoorde, 2013). However, in general it is defined as *“the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigour and alertness without undue fatigue and with plenty of energy to enjoy the demands from the leisure time and to respond to unexpected emergencies”* (Saba, 2006: 120; Rocha, 2017: 4). *“In reality, the term fitness is commonly used to refer to the practice of exercise in gyms and health clubs”* (Rocha, 2017: 4), both are spaces created to perform *“physical activities where they offer services of evaluation, prescription and orientation of physical exercises”* (Mendes, 2012: 2). Although, there is a difference between what is a health club and a gym, both intend to create a space to work-out. Those differences are especially in terms of structure and dimensions. A health club has larger dimensions to respond the wide range of activities they offer, making it necessary to have more staff, on the other hand a gym focuses on areas for cardio machines, (bicycles, treadmills, ellipticals ...), bodybuilding and toning machines and free weights (Mendes, 2012).

The sports facilities, designed for fitness activities, according to Association of Portuguese Companies of Gyms and Academies (AGAP) 2016 report, can be divided into four categories/types:

- Conventional;
- With personalized training studio / functional training box;
- Personalized training studio / functional training box;
- Female.

In 2016, the conventional gyms account for 74%, dominating the Portuguese market, gyms with personalized training studio represented 11%, personalized training studio 5% and female gyms 10% of the market. Currently, there are two new types, emerging and gaining more importance in the sector: CrossFit boxes and units of Electrical muscle stimulation (AGAP, 2016).

The fitness industry has been very successful in combining elements of sports, enrichment of social relationships, health improvements, concerns about aesthetic and business development. By providing several services some more focused in physical activities as: group classes, bodybuilding, functional training, swimming pool or racket sports others concerned about health issues, as: nutrition, psychology, physiotherapy or spa treatments (AGAP, 2016). According to Santos and Correia (2011; Rocha 2017: 4), *“fitness is not just about health clubs and exercise, or to gain strength and achieve health benefits, but in turn, fitness should be understood as a multidimensional sector that is concerned about: negotiation, competitors’ specificities and constant search for the ideal services for potential consumers”*. Progressively, there has been an increase on demand, health clubs are under pressure to adapt, as fast as possible, their offer needs to match the customer’s needs and desires, having as motivation for work, the satisfaction, retention and commitment of customers (Caldeira, 2006; Rocha, 2017).

### **2.1.1 | Fitness industry**

In an overall view, the fitness seen as a business moves millions, in Europe according to a report developed by Deloitte, in 2017, the sector had a total of 26.3 billion € in revenues, with an average fee of 41.4€ per month paid by over 56 million of members enrolled in the 54 710 health clubs spread through the continent.

Taking a deeper look to the Portuguese market, the numbers are a bit lower in comparison to the rest of the European countries. According to the report from AGAP, in 2017, Portugal had a penetration rate of 5.6%, which is quite below than the European average, 7.5%, according to Deloitte’s report from 2017, this may happen because of the Portuguese low per capita income as well as consumer priorities, in their hierarchy the portuguese define going to a health club, as a non-priority if the income does not allow it. In the national panorama, the statistics show that there is a lot of space to grow (Cardadeiro, Ferreira & Pedragosa, 2018), in 2017 there were about 1100 health clubs for 535 215 members spread throughout the country. Taking into account that Portugal has

about 10 million people (Pordata, 2019) only 5% of the population is enrolled in a health club, which means there is 95% of potential customers who need to be motivated to start going. That is a job for over the 20 000 employees working as part and full time in the health clubs. As far as revenues, the sector generated an amount of more than 220 million euros, which came mainly from, the monthly fees of 38,03€ on average.

## 2.2 | The power of brands in the fitness sector

One way a product or a service is identified and associated with a particular company is through the brand, according to the American Marketing Association (AMA) a brand is defined as *“a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”* (Sampaio, 2016: 5).

As mentioned, what allows companies to be distinguished is the brands, the elements that characterize and enable firms to be recognized, through those elements it is possible to raise awareness, create an identity and at the same time develop and work the reputation of a product, service, staff or organization (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015).

From observing the Fitness industry in Portugal, there is a high level of competitiveness in the sector. In the market there is a wide range of options (Table 1), from low-cost to premium and individual companies to health club chains spread across the country with more incidence in the large urban centers, as Lisbon with 31%, which is divided into 46% corresponding to chains and 19% to individuals and Porto with 17%, from that 20% are from chains and 15% from individuals, according to AGAP’s 2016 report.

<b>Health Club</b>	<b>Number of facilities in the country</b>	<b>Category of gym</b>
Viva Fit	14	Ladies Fitness Boutique
Solinca	20	Low-cost
Pump	9	Low-cost Premium
Holmes Place	21	Premium
Fitness Hut	42	Low-cost
Go Fit	2	Conventional

**Table 1** - Brands presence in Portuguese market. Source: elaborated by the author.



The differentiation of brands is extremely important, considering the offer that exists in the market (Table 1). If nothing separates them, e.g., price, offer, quality or characteristics of the service, they can hardly gain an advantage over the others (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015), since all offer the same kind of service, physical exercise.

The difficulty in distinguishing brands, can lead customers to get confused, to which brand corresponds a certain service or similar aspects as colours or even advertisement that might look the same as the competitor. It is crucial that potential club members think of a specific health club brand, e. g., Solinca, when thinking about services within this category: health clubs (Williams, Rhenwick, Wright, Choi, Kim & Vickey, 2014), if they are not a top of mind brand for the consumers, it means the experience is not being memorable enough to be repeated or remembered.

According to Keller (1999; Sampaio, 2016: 6) “*the true power of brands is in the consumers mind*”, in order to better understand consumers' perception and knowledge of the brand, it is important to create a portfolio with that information, e.g., through surveys. This assessment will provide more accurate information about the health club positioning in the market. At the same time review what are the weaknesses and strengths and what consumers expect from the health club. The power of the brand can be translated in the ability a brand has to influence consumers choice, knowing that a product or service belongs to a certain brand, can be the reason for choosing them and not a competitor. This means the consumer considers that brand as more reliable than the others. The confidence can be built through experiences carried by the staff and the results are transformed in positive recommendations (word of mouth), reviews and comparisons with similar experiences.

The ability companies have to become icons of a certain sector, is something that has to be worked since day one. The experience provided in the service is what influences the most. The experience is something consumers will memorize and assess, and later it will be used to evaluate whether it is worth coming back again or not (Ferreira, 2017).

The big question is how can managers increase the power of their brand in the market? Sampaio (2016) defines three aspects companies should work on to increase their influence in the market:

- consistency, by keeping a straight line of work, consumers will feel safer and more confident the service will always be provided with the same quality, as demonstrated so far.
- Decrease the potential risks for consumers, the more reliable a brand is the less risks consumers will feel when deciding to purchase a certain service. It is imperative that the consumer feels comfortable, if the health club is able to maintain a high level of quality, lower will be the risks of an unpleasant experience.
- Develop a set of functional and emotional characteristics treasured by consumers, understand what consumers value, the needs members seek to satisfy and align health clubs offer with their demand.

But above all, be able to differentiate from competitors. As mentioned before, there are a lot of options for consumers in the market, having a famous brand or not might influence the consumers decision (Guimarães & Santos, 2011). In the end, health clubs need to think, do consumers choose us because of our brand or for other reason.

However not everything is linear, there are several setbacks that companies face to stay on the cutting edge, the constant changes promoted by consumers or other companies lead to high levels of competitiveness, for a minute a company can miss great opportunities. The globalization is another aspect that can lead brands to lose their identity or opportunities, the fact companies want to cover a large market, can make them lose prescriptive of what has already been built. To have a successful entry in the market a health club, or any other kind of business, should not just apply their own concept but also never lose sight of the specific characteristics of the local culture. All this requires maximum attention of workers as well as large investments, being a step ahead and prepared is enough to gain an advantage over the other players, thus increasing health clubs' market power (Guimarães & Santos, 2011) and the capacity to influence consumers decision.

For a brand to be synonymous of quality, trustworthiness, managers need to define strategies that stick to the brands identity, at the same time develop a plan that turns them into a top of mind brand for consumers. Some of the strategies that can help health clubs achieving high levels of influence are through their capacity of differentiation and positive word-of-mouth.

The strategies based on differentiation are created with the intention of showing something different from what has already been done in the market, as well as to stand out positively. This will create in the consumer a desire to experiment the service, an example of how these strategies could be applied is through sensorial marketing, produce stimuli through the senses to attract consumers. After experimenting the service, two things can happen either consumers enjoyed the experience and recommend it to other people or did not find it pleasant and can make derogatory comments or not make a reference at all. The recommendations through word-of-mouth are the best ones, suggestions made by consumers are considered more credible than those coming from companies (Naz, 2014). Because it is regular people testing the service and opine in the end, it is not information manipulated by the company. Later, the results can appear through characteristics that are attributed to the health club and associations that are made with them, which will help defining the brand.

It is possible to perceive the power of a brand when its name starts to be used in place of the product, e.g., people no longer say they want a soda to order a coca-cola, they just say coca-cola (Mallmann, 2016). So, for health clubs to get this kind of distinction, health clubs need to do something out of the box to be remembered and associated with, implement a strategy through sensorial marketing might give them the tools to become a stronger brand in the segment.

### **2.3 | Importance of Location for health clubs**

The location is an extremely important factor for acquisition, retention and cancellation of consumers. This factor is related with consumers' willingness to travel with the purpose of working-out. Is the health club target available to move around? Is the quality of the facility motivation enough to make members go there? Or is it too far and the characteristics are not worthy.

According to Fitness and exercise spaces guidance (2008), one of the first steps, for managers, is to define the type of building. There are independent facilities or build inside a larger edifice, this will affect the dimensions of the facilities required. However, if in the future there is an intention to expand the facilities it is necessary to have space for it.

Then it is essential to choose a location, considering the area of coverage, it is essential to know who the target is and where they are. If the health club is performing a service destined to a certain segment of the market, they should seek for location that

target have an easy access to. Also, it is important to analyse the potentiality of the market in that location, e.g., if is situated within a large urban cluster or in a business area, it will have a lot of opportunities to growth, due to the density of those areas, but at the same time it may not be the real target of the health club.

Although it is important to be close to the target, it is necessary to ponder the costs associated with both the building and region. Depending on the relevancy of the zone, different prices per square meter are established, and areas closer to the center of the capital will have higher prices for rent than the outskirts areas. Besides this, in Portugal there are taxes relating to the properties as the Municipal Property Tax called Imposto Municipal sobre Imóveis (IMI).

Related to the location, is the accessibility. The health club can have the most beautiful view with amazing facilities but if customers cannot get there, it was a waste of money and resources.

There are a wide number of options consumers may have to arrive to the health club, e.g. public transports, on foot, personal vehicles. It is important to take into account two aspect. First, the time it takes to get there and, normally the members find acceptable a time between 10 to 15 minutes' walking or 5 minutes driving distance, and second parking spaces for those who prefer using their own vehicles.

However, it is also necessary to think in the consumer perspective, regarding the costs of the journey, the time spent in the transports or the easiness to find a parking space, this are constrains that in consumers mind may compensate or not the investment done.

Therefore, in order to take advantage of the location, in the acquisition, retention of members, the Fitness and exercise spaces guidance (2008) suggests several points as:

- Define the project in the long term for the health club, with the possibility of expanding the facilities, if necessary;
- Have an easy accessibility, the less time consumers spend in transports more time they have to be in the health club;
- The safety of the area is also a factor that gives rest to members, since there are no external concerns that can alarm them.

## 2.4 | Marketing

The concept of marketing is constantly being build up, adapting to new perspectives in response to new concept developed in the market. Over the years Marketing has had several definitions, currently the standard for both the academic and professional perspective comes from the AMA, stating that *“Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”*.

Nowadays, there are several types of marketing, each created as a response to a specific research area, e.g.: neuro marketing, relationship marketing, digital marketing, sports marketing or even sensory marketing. The last two will be studied in the next two sections.

### 2.4.1 | Sports Marketing

The world of sports is seen as a business capable of moving millions. This sector has been growing and joining this growth is the specialization of professionals as well as concepts adapted from other industries that now are applied to sports, marketing was no exception.

Ratten (2016: 164) refers that *“Marketing is an important and necessary strategic activity for sports organizations concerned about their communications technology and how to focus resources on the best markets to target.”* Essentially, it concerns the sports environment and the organization's competencies, which will increase the value of the product or service to the customer. Several definitions, of sports marketing, have been developed over the years, among them from Shilbury, Quick and Westerbeek (1998: 13; Bühler, Nufer & Rennhak, 2006: 1) referring that: *“Sport marketing is a social and managerial process by which the sport manager seeks to obtain what sporting organisations need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others.”* Another example was developed by Beech and Chadwick (2007: 4-5) referring that *“it is an ongoing process through which contests with an uncertain outcome are staged creating opportunities for the simultaneous fulfilment of direct and indirect objectives amongst sport customers, sport businesses and other related individuals and organisations.”* The adjustment made to the sports marketing definition, is to whom it applies, instead of being individuals or groups it becomes sport managers, sports organisations (Bühler, Nufer & Rennhak, 2006), sports products and services.

Among the particularities of sports marketing, Fullerton & Merz (2008), defined three principles of the industry (Table 2): the nature of the sports marketing focus (marketing of sports or marketing through sports); the nature of the product (sports or non-sports); and the level of integration of sports within the marketing strategy (traditional or sponsorship-based).

<b>Principles of Sports marketing</b>		
Nature of sports marketing focus	Products	Level of integration
Marketing of sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sports Products;</li> <li>▪ Spectator sports;</li> <li>▪ Participation Sports;</li> <li>▪ Sporting goods, apparel, athletic;</li> <li>▪ Shoes, and Sport-related products.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traditional;</li> <li>▪ Target market selection;</li> <li>▪ Marketing-mix decisions.</li> </ul>
Marketing through sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Non-sports products</li> </ul>	Sponsorship-Based: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traditional;</li> <li>▪ Venue;</li> <li>▪ Naming Rights;</li> <li>▪ Endorsements;</li> <li>▪ Licensing.</li> </ul>

**Table 2** - The Basic Principles of Sports Marketing. Source: (Fullerton & Merz, 2008: 96; adapted by the author).

Sports marketing can be implemented in two ways (Table 2): the marketing of sports and marketing through sports (Bühler, Nufer & Rennhak, 2006), in both the sport is used to promote a service or a product, but the product or service may not be sports related.

First, marketing of sports, is the one that applies “*marketing variables to communicate the benefits of sport participation and spectatorship to potential consumers*” (Shilbury, Quick & Westerbeek, 1998: 12; Bühler, Nufer & Rennhak, 2006: 2), in other words, uses sports marketing techniques to promote sports products and services, whereas, marketing through sports represents the promotion of a product or service, not related to sports, but using sport to advertise it (Costa & Lopes, 2012). A good example is through sponsorships, companies associate themselves to an event, a team or even a player, in order to promote their company (Nufer, 2002; Bühler, Nufer & Rennhak, 2006), most of the time those companies have nothing to do with sports but take advantage to communicate with the customers (Table 3).

	<b>Marketing of Sports</b>	<b>Marketing through Sports</b>
<b>Agents</b>	Sports entities (federations, clubs, leagues)	Companies
<b>Strategy</b>	Use of marketing in their sports management actions	Use of sports in their marketing actions
<b>Nature of action</b>	Marketing actions of products and services	Promotional marketing actions
<b>Focus</b>	Product and service	Institutional image

**Table 3** - The differences between marketing of sports and marketing through sports. Source: Melo Neto, 2006: 65; Costa & Lopes, 2012: 170, adapted by the author.

Beyond these specific points, sports marketing differs from other types of marketing as the concept of product or service. In sports marketing there is only the sports product. Shank (1999: 16; Bühler, Nufer & Rennhak, 2006: 3) refers that a sport product is “*a good, a service, or any combination of the two that is designed to provide benefits to a sports spectator, participant, or sponsor*”. All the things the sports organization can provide to fulfil the needs of those interested, as it is explained by Beech and Chadwick (2007) something in which consumers can participate actively, (football match), equipment we use to work out, (running shoes), something we can watch 'live' or on TV (sports event) or other sports related products (fitness services). This concept incorporates both products and services, however it is important to distinguish them. The services differ from products in the way they are produced, consumed and evaluated (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). A service is something intangible, is produced in a specific period, e.g. a fitness class, while a product is a physical asset something tangible, as running shoes (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Nonetheless, services have specific features (Table 4): “*intangibility, inseparability, perishability and heterogeneity*” (Costa & Lopes, 2012: 172-173).

<b>Characteristic</b>	
Intangibility	The service offered cannot be seen, touched, tasted or smelled prior to purchase, e. g., See the facilities or watch a group class in a Health club.
Inseparability	The production of a service and its consumption is simultaneous, e. g., The production of the group lesson has to be consumed at the same time. It cannot be saved and consumed later.
Perishability	The product cannot be produced and stored for future use, e. g., After taking a class, customers cannot save it to do in the future.
Heterogeneity	The service provided will vary each time it is produced. This makes it difficult to standardise the performance. Services have a high level of unpredictability, e. g., The same instructor gives the same class three times a day all of them are going to be different. The energy, the participants will influence the way he performs the service.

**Table 4** - Characteristics of the services product. Source: Beech & Chadwick, 2007: 162-164; adapted by the author.

These aspects need to be considered, since the way services are performed has a great influence, in consumers perception of the quality of the service, as well as the motivation to return. Ratten (2015; Ratten, 2016: 162) referred that “*sports marketers need to identify the most prominent features that attract spectators, participants and views*” because the sports industry is different from the rest “*because of the personal identification sport has with people*” (Mullin, 1983; Ratten, 2016: 162).

According to what has been investigated, sports marketing intends to promote sports, its participation as well as increasing the visibility of sports. Sport marketing can be used to promote the consumption of sport related products and services as well as non-sports products and services, depending on what kind of product or service is being communicated. It can also be a way to encourage fan interest, by evolving and increasing the linkage between sport products and services with consumers (Ratten, 2016).



### 2.4.2 | Sensory Marketing

The sensory marketing is a quite new tool in the marketing communication process, described as the sensory impact on the customer's senses (Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017), "*is a marketing tool that studies and develops campaigns and ways to arouse the customers senses: vision, hearing, taste, touch and smell*" (Alvim-hannas, Silva, Souza, Souza & Ventura, 2017: 1).

Currently, there have been more scientific publications dedicated to the sensory marketing subject, about how marketers are "*shaping consumer decisions by sensory stimuli*" (Krishna & Schwarz 2014; Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017: 227). In the traditional point of view marketing is more focused on the product and acquiring customers (Hultén, 2011), whereas in the sensory marketing the focus is about deeper values related to behaviours, emotions, cognition, sensations and symbolisms (Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017). Nowadays the use of traditional strategies such as: printed media, TV, radio and outdoor advertising, solely are not enough, the inclusion of the senses in the communication channels is seen as an important complement (Gómez R & Mejía, 2012) to reach the consumers.

Krishna (2012: 2), defines sensory marketing as the "*marketing that engages the consumers' senses and affects their behaviours*", going even further in this definition, the concept of sensory marketing suggests that this is a marketing that impacts the perception, judgment and behaviour of consumers (Krishna, 2012). To support the sensory marketing approach there are senses and strategies that are developed in association with certain stimuli that have the ability to influence not just the emotions but also consumers behaviours with the aim of engaging, increase brand awareness and profitability (Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017).

Hultén (2011: 263), refers that a "*strategy is defined as sensorial, when it appeals to a certain sense or senses in the customer's mind*". With so many competitors in the market, whether in the fitness sector or not, there is a need to find a new way to stand out from the competition, a sensorial strategy could be an option, especially when issues related to price or quality are irrelevant due to the similarity that exists in the market. Therefore, when implementing a sensory marketing strategy, the focus is on using the senses to create an image of a product, service or company in the consumer's mind, so it will be easier for them to identify and differentiate each company (Hultén, 2011).

To put these strategies into practice, it is necessary to create subconscious triggers in the most efficient way, e.g. through colours or music, trying to catch customers attention. This focus on the senses, will develop consumers ability to perceive abstract attributes as: colour, taste, smell or shape (Krishna, 2012).

Fundamentally, a sensorial marketing strategy is a process that combines sensors, sensations, and sensory expressions (Table 5), which are used to create a pleasant experience for the consumer (Hultén, 2011).

- Hultén (2011: 264) defines a sensor as communicative tool, as a transmitter “*sensations or sensory expressions (stimuli) or receiving information (signals) via devices, equipment, material, or employees in relation to the customer*”;
- “*A sensation is defined as an emotion or feeling that deliberately links the human mind and the senses*” (Hultén, 2011: 264);
- A sensory expression is defined as being “*an experience trigger that leaves an imprint in the customer’s mind*” (Hultén, 2011: 265).

Sensors	Sensations	Example of Sensory expressions
Smell	Atmospheric	Smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Air freshener spray.
Sound	Auditory	Music (style, volume), Noise pollution (conversation between people).
Sight	Visual	Design, Colour, Room layout, Landscape
Touch	Tactile	Texture of machine (handles)

**Table 5** - Sensors, sensations and sensory expressions. Source: Hultén et al. 2009; Hultén, 2011: 265; adapted by the author.

It is important for managers to figure out where to intervene to provide an experience that consumers will remember, by creating “*an image that challenges the human mind and senses*” (Hultén, 2011: 258). Through Table 5, it is easy to see where health clubs’ marketers have an opportunity to influence, by creating stimuli capable of interfering in the way consumers perceive the service as well as positively influence consumers’ final decision. The perception of a sense is related with “*the awareness or understanding of sensory information*” (Krishna, 2012: 3), the interpretation of information received as well as previous experiences is filtered by the five senses (sight, sound, taste, smell and touch) (Van Jaarsveld, 2010). Marques (2016: 14), refers “*there*

*are several authors who defend the importance of sensory perception in the work of the marketer, in order to correctly understand and satisfy the desires and needs of consumers”.*

### **2.4.3 | Multi-sensory strategy**

Whenever a company use more than just one sense in their sales process, it is called a multi-sensory strategy (Hultén, 2011). Several authors have been investigating this subject Krishna (2006, 2011, 2015), Hultén (2013), Cian & Cervai (2011), Pawaskar & Goel (2014) “*believe in the emotional importance that the senses can bring*” (Marques, 2016: 2), to consumers mind, the use of two or more senses can have a greater impact on their experience as well as their final decision to purchase the product or service.

However, it is not enough to just have the senses there, according to Eriksson & Larsson (2011: 48) it is “*important to study and understand the interaction of different sensory cues*” so they can be well combined. These cues are going to affect consumers senses and the result will be seen on how they change attitudes, preferences and perceptions (Eriksson & Larsson, 2011) considering the stimuli implemented.

A multi-sensory strategy is therefore an important feature to be consider, it generates value by appealing to the human senses, creating an experience that allows customers to have “*fun, live out fantasies and have feelings*” (Rodrigues et al. 2011; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Eriksson & Larsson, 2011: 48). These strategies combining multiple senses can be seen in the “*design of the product, its packaging, its brand, the environment in which it can be bought and in which it can be consumed and/or communicated*” (Gómez R & Mejía, 2012: 174). According to Table 5, “*Sensors, sensations and sensory expressions*”, a multisensory strategy should involve the combination of at least two sensors, the marketer’s job is to strategically insert sensory expressions that will be exposed to the consumer and possibly make a difference in the purchase decision.

### **2.5 | The Senses**

The big question is how managers are going to develop strategies, combining one or more senses? will they go for a multisensorial approach or just focused in one? The important point is to have a positive impact on the consumer experience. For this it is necessary to understand senses particularities, in this case: audition, vision, smell and touch.

### 2.5.1 | Smell

In a strategy where the smell is the main ingredient, “*the atmospheric sensations and their sensory expressions*” (Hultén, 2011: 268), play a huge part in the physical environment in which a service occurs. Kuczamer-Kłopotowska (2017: 229) refers that “*smell is an ‘associative sense’, as with it, you can influence neural connections responsible for associations*”. However, health clubs cannot fall into the mistake that consumers will make the associations in the same way, e.g.: for some the sweat means hard work and it does not bother, for others is an unpleasant smell to be working out with.

Several studies refer that, there exist a correlation between smells and parts of our brain, there is a direct neurological access to memories, emotions and motivations, which is called “*the limbic system of the brain - which stores and mediates the memories*” (Batey, 2010: 117; Braga & Oliveira, 2013: 7). Those studies have confirmed “*that olfactory stimuli not only improve memory and mood but also may impact our behaviours and decision making.*” (Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017: 229). Therefore, having a scent that can motivate and give more energy to members, it can be an influencing factor in their attendance.

The memories produced by the smell are those that last longer, are more detailed and brings more associated emotions compared to the other senses (Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017). Through smell it is possible to create an identity, have a characteristic perfume easy to be associated with, becoming a positive point (Cerqueira, 2014). In a health club, the application of the smell as a strategy should be very careful, as the predominant smell might be sweat coming from the participants, which should be fought by the managers with fresh and soft aromas in order to avoid a heavy environment. Besides sweat, cleaning fragrances might be an unpleasant smell to work out with, the smell of the bleach, as an example, not only is it unpleasant as it can become dangerous for our health.

So, in order to make it an enjoyable experience, it is necessary to find ways to overlay those horrible smells by finding fragrances customers feel comfortable with, one that has a positive impact during their work-out time, instead of negatively influence the perception of the space, and at the same time create positive memories.

## 2.5.2 | Audition

Considered to be the second most important sense for marketing messages, the reception of sounds like music or the tone of voice can affect and interfere with emotions. Marketeers use the sound of voices to communicate and project an emotional value on consumers mind, their consciousness and memories, as well as to highlight important messages (Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017).

It is true, that is through the eyes customers absorbs most of the information but through hearing, consumers receive lots of information as well, and its influence can be compared with sight (Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017). A “*research carried out by Millward Brown found that 65% of mood changes can be attributed to sounds we receive*” (Broweus, Hultén & van Dijk, 2009: 69-71; Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017: 228), according to Braga and Oliveira (2013), the sound of music has a huge capacity to influence an emotional state.

Ira Altschule (Psychiatrist who studies the effects of music on the human organism), affirms that music can be considered an element of persuasion because “*if music can get to the thalamus, then it means that music attacks the nervous system directly*” (Braga & Oliveira, 2013: 6), the thalamus is responsible for transmitting sensory information and functioning as a centre for pain perception (Barcia, Herrero & Navarro, 2002).

There are several ways that music can be introduced and used as a persuasion component, for instance through songs, tones of voice or jingles, to which customers associate a specific brand, product or service. In addition to these and in order to create a more appealing environment it can be used as ambient music, e.g., in retail spaces, hotels, restaurants, airplanes (Krishna, 2011) as well as in health clubs, in group classes, where it plays a huge role, setting the mood and a positive atmosphere for everyone, instructor and participants.

The use of sounds as a strategy in health clubs can be done in several ways, through advertising by creating sounds that are easy to recognize, characteristic of them, music from group classes, from the working out room also through ambient music in the changing rooms or reception. Besides this, the music style, volume and the quality of the speakers should be considered to improve experience, excitement and motivation to come back. The connection between the consumer's state of mind and the sounds can be a

determining factor for a satisfactory experience, motivation and repetition. Based on an article written by Krishna (2011), the author provides examples of categories of sounds:

1. Sound symbolism, *“When we hear the sound of a word, we attach meaning to it, even perceiving physical features for the source of the sound”* (Krishna 2011: 10);
2. Music from the advertisements, the songs, melodies, jingles attached to an ad can be a direct connection to a service, when the consumer hears, they already know to whom it belongs;
3. Ambient music, *“can influence consumer mood, actual time spent in a location”* (Krishna 2011: 10), several areas can take advantage as: reception, work out room, lockers.
4. Voice, the sounds emitted by the voices of the spokespeople can have an influence in the customers decisions. The voice pitch and vocal speech rate are two factors that can affect customers perception of the speaker, *“in general, listeners attribute greater competence and credibility to individuals who speak more quickly”* (Stewart & Ryan, 1982; Krishna, 2011: 10). In the health clubs the ways sellers approach the consumer needs to be very carefully planned, as the tone of voice used can be attractive and helpful in convincing the consumer or it can do the opposite and turn him/her away.

### **2.5.3 | Vision**

The Vision is the most explored sense by marketers, Batey (2010; Braga & Oliveira, 2013:4) refers that *“35% of the brain's strength is dedicated to the visual process”*. Most of the consumers trust more in what they see than anything else and this helps them to make their daily decisions (Kuczamer-Kłopotowska 2017), *“an image speaks more than a thousand words”* (Braga and Oliveira, 2013: 5).

Consumers' perceptions can be influenced by *“shapes, colours, design, and aesthetics, as well as shapes and compositions of specific visual aspects”* (Kuczamer-Kłopotowska 2017: 228), these elements are intended to trigger certain emotions in consumers. As an example, the decoration, the layout of the space, the landscape or even the colours used are aspects analysed by our eyes. According to Cerrato (2012), each colour has a different meaning, in health clubs, the choice of the colours should consider the ones transmitting feelings of motivation, energy, happiness, power, confidence as red, green, yellow, blue. The layout of the room is also crucial for a good judgement from the consumer point of view, having an organized space in a sequential way can add value to

the service. Also, the decoration needs to be well aligned with the health club's identity, in order to pass the right message, a premium service cannot present a sloppy service, is not in concordance with the health club image.

#### **2.5.4 | Touch**

Krishna (2011: 4), refers that *“as early as the 4th century BC, Aristotle proposed his theory of sensation which suggests that our five senses are ordered hierarchically, with “touch” on top, and the other senses increasing the acuity of the touch sensation”*. The first instinct of the human being is to touch things – *“catching, holding, touching, sliding hands on the object”* (Braga & Oliveira, 2013: 6). By touching an object, customers can feel it in three dimensions, *“it is a way of appreciating physical forms and ensuring that something is concrete”* (Braga & Oliveira, 2013: 6). The use of a tangible approach, in marketing, *“is based on interaction and it allows transferring information or emotions through physical (or virtual) contact with objects”* (Hultén, Broweus & van Dijk, 2009; Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017: 230).

Touch is sensed by the tactile receptors in our skin and stored in our brain, through them customers can *“feel temperature (cold and hot), surfaces (rough or smooth), shapes, weight, or softness of objects”* (Hultén, Broweus & van Dijk, 2009; Kuczamer-Kłopotowska, 2017: 230).

Although in certain services is hard to create a strategy based on touch, is important not to neglect it, in a health club making sure the temperature of water is proper, the equipment's as handle, benches, towels have a nice feeling, can improve customers experience and satisfaction.

Concluding this chapter, it is possible to understand how sensorial marketing can be developed and adapted to several industries. Overall marketing is about communication and conception of products and services customized to the needs of consumers. The main concern is to provide a memorable experience that makes consumers want to come back, the senses can do that.

#### **2.6 | Decision Making Process and senses**

Falcão (2011: 21) refers that the *“decision making is the moment of choosing one among several alternatives, inserted in a process that comprises different stages”*. In this process the consumer goes through a series of steps before making the final decision,

Churchill and Peter (2007; Alvim-hannas, Silva, Souza, Souza & Ventura, 2017), defined five stages the decision maker passes until reaching that decision:

1. Problem recognition;

Acknowledgement of a need, the individual feels that he is not in a state of equilibrium which leads him to establish a problem.

2. Formulation of alternatives;

Search for information that can help solve the problem, it can come from personal sources as friends or family, professional experts like sellers, search mechanisms as the internet, libraries or experiencing the product.

3. Assessment of alternatives;

According to criteria defined by the consumer, they will analyse the attributes of the product or service in question and figure out which one suits better their expectations within the conditions previously established.

4. Final choice;

Is how, where and when to purchase the product or service. There is a preference that is within the criteria, which inducing the purchase.

5. Post-purchase behaviour.

It is time to evaluate and make a comparison between this acquisition and previous ones, attributing a satisfaction rate. Also understand if there is an intention of future re-purchase as well as recommendation to others.

All the process goes around three aspects: identification, not just the problem but also the alternatives, development of a research to gather information about the alternatives and selection, of the best option available (Falcão, 2011).

The definition of this process as well as all steps, enabled companies to be prepared to predict consumer behaviours and thus have an offer matching consumer needs. The way consumers make their decisions reflect many of their characteristics “*such as their needs, resolution skills, cognitive dexterity or leadership ability*” (Falcão, 2011: 8). As a result of this process, companies may have access to information such as consumer



preferences or opinions and consequently make a more appropriate selection of information that might be useful for them in the future.

By planning all the steps customers go through, companies “*have more control over the process and, can, therefore, reach decisions with better quality with less time and resources invested*” (Yu, Marcatonio, Porto, Sousa & Takenouchi; 2015: 82).

The five senses of the human being, have the ability to interfere with consumers emotions along with the decision-making process, affecting perception, behaviours and consumption (Kumar, 2014; Vaz, 2017). The influence of the senses in the decision of the consumer happens through stimuli created strategically by companies in order to influence the consumers choice. Being exposed to a stimulus may alter customers judgment. The perception consumers have, e.g., of a space can be easily influenced by how the senses are stimulated, with a smell, a colour or even music style. The information the consumer receives through the senses may be the reason for making a certain choice, a colour that was more pleasant and attractive or a smell that was fresher.

The senses can be an extra motivation factor for choosing a certain health club, either by a particular smell that pleases the person, or by the way the room is drawn with appealing and motivating colours making members feel comfortable.

According to Vasilache (2013; Vaz, 2017: 1), the purchase intentions are based on “*past experiences, memories and satisfaction involved, and so it is possible to conclude that the human being in its essence is more emotional than rational*”, so if companies are capable of creating a memorable stimuli they will be easily remembered when consumers are formulating alternatives as a solution for the problem.

## **2.7 | Acquisition, retention and cancelation of memberships in Health clubs**

Like other businesses, health clubs have as main objective the retention of clients, according to Czepiel and Rosenberg (1984; Gonçalves, 2012: 23) “*the acquisition of new clients can cost 5 to 10 times more than the satisfaction and retention of the current ones*”. In accordance to Gotham (2016), the customer follows a path, called customer lifecycle, starting in acquisition, they grow inside the company and then, members either becoming loyal or cancel their membership.

### 2.7.1 | Acquisition

The acquisition is a phase of the consumer lifecycle in which marketing strategies are created to inform and stimulate consumers interest in experimenting, creating a desire for the service or product. Without customers there is no way to expand the business and make it profitable, which is why “*companies are concerned about attracting customers as it is one of the best ways to enable the growth and financial expansion*” (Gomes de Lima, Martarello, Ráiz & Vendrame, 2012: 77). Some points are considered key for acquisition: first impression, the experience and interaction between staff and customers are important not just to create a relationship but also get leads for new customers and making customers part of the selling process.

To develop an acquisition strategy, health clubs need to know and understand consumer needs, what are they looking for in addition to what they expect from the service and for that the company should think, from consumers point of view (Stone & Woodcock, 1998; Gomes de Lima, Martarello, Ráiz & Vendrame; 2012).

For a successful acquisition of consumers, it is necessary to gather data about their characteristics as preferences, interests or objectives, this information needs to be collected, analysed and followed (Gomes de Lima, Martarello, Ráiz & Vendrame, 2012) to have a better perception of what consumer are looking for in health club.

Overall, acquiring customers can be done through several methods, e.g., in virtual platforms, through banners, website or social networks. Based on these last two, managers have access to more accurate information about consumers. There will be a trace of their research, e.g., where they clicked, in which pages they spent more time or if the consumer asks for more information, they will leave their personal contacts, which in the future can be used by the health club to inform about new promotions or new activities, which they might have already showed interest in. Or physically, in a billboards, by word-of-mouth or because they were already looking for a new space to work-out and decided to visit the facilities of the health club, and also get know the staff as well as membership conditions.

The senses play an important role in this part, as they are created to stimulate consumers' interest, through appealing visual effects in advertisements, website, social networks, or in the physical space have a fresh, light environment that makes consumers want to be there, influencing their decision.

The acquisition is characterized by the first contact between the consumer and the health club, it is where he goes from potential consumer to become a member of the health club, the next step is to ensure they stay for a long time, become loyal. Now is time for retention.

### **2.7.2 | Retention**

The retention is the second stage of the consumer's life cycle, retention “*refers to the permanence of the members*” (Storbacka, Strandvik & Gronroos, 1994; Gonçalves, 2012: 45), one of the main concerns of health clubs is to maintain a good relationship with their members (Gerpott et al., 2001; Gonçalves, 2012). Nowadays, consumers have several options in the market, which makes it harder for companies to keep members around, putting more pressure in the in staff to create and establish a good relationship with the customer. The objective is to provide the best possible experience, every single time.

As was previously mentioned, it is cheaper to keep a customer than having to do the whole process of acquiring a new one or even try to recover the lost ones (Ferreira, 2012). “*The gyms as any other for-profit company, realized that it is cheaper to promote and maintain relationships with the existing customers than to invest in the acquisition of new ones*” (Dhurup, 2012; Ferreira, 2012: 21).

Taking into account the increase of competitiveness in the sector and the difficulty in finding strategies that encourage the population to practice sport, according to a news from Expresso, only 5% of the Portuguese population is enrolled in a health club in 2018 (Nunes, 2018), growing the importance of designing strategies and tactics to prevent the loss of customers (Ferreira, 2012). For Talley (2008; Gonçalves, 2012) there is no simple solution, the management of retention needs to consider a set of variables that can affect members loyalty behaviour.

According to Gonçalves (2012), the author identifies four variables that affect retention in the fitness sector: the influence of satisfaction (Alexandris et al., 2004; Bodet, 2006); positioning (Tharrett & Peterson, 2006; Green, 2005; Alexandris et al., 2004); the expectations and well-being (Alexandris et al., 2004; Power, 2008) and socio-demographic and consumption (Diener et al., 1997; Kural, 2010).

To start, the consumer satisfaction, involves many aspects, from the quality and professionalism of the staff to the quality of the equipment as well as the facilities,

according to Equestre (2004; Gonçalves, 2012: 46) “*each members’ experience should be consistently positive, intentional, differentiated and valued. If this occurs, not only will the purchase renewal process be easier and more tempting, as membership satisfaction will increase by promoting recommendations*”. Hence it is important to ensure consumer satisfaction to increase the retention rate.

Secondly, the positioning, “*it resides in the perception that consumers have about a certain service*” (Gonçalves, 2012: 48). This point is divided in two features:

- Identification and differentiation, whilst the identification is about the definition of what kind of service health club provides by the members, “*understand to which categories of service the consumer associates the service in question*” (Gonçalves, 2012: 48), the differentiation occurs when they are able to distinguish the services, based on their perceptions of it, “*a service needs features that differentiate it from others*” (Gonçalves, 2012: 48).
- Perception in fitness, it “*consists of perceiving the members' perception of their club, comparing them with similar services, and understanding how this perception contributes to their choice and permanence in the club*” (Brenda & Stotlar, 1996; Gonçalves, 2012: 49). The way consumers see and the aspects compared with other players in the market, helps to realize how the stimuli produced by the health club are interfering with their insight about the club.

The third variable, it joins expectations and well-being. The expectations are something build in consumers mind, what he/she hopes to happen. According to Robinson (2006; Gonçalves, 2012: 53), these expectations are created “*based on the needs, desires and motivations of consumers, along with their previous experiences, word of mouth, media disclosure, price and image*”. The expectations can be managed by health clubs through standardization of the service. The more a service follows a certain sequence of actions, the less divergence between expectations and reality will exist. The well-being is related to a “*balance between body, mind and spirit*” (Gonçalves, 2012: 15), it reflects the satisfaction of an individual. Features as safety, quality and comfort are synonyms of satisfaction that in this perspective are translated or reflected in the numbers of retention partners (Sirgy & Lee, 2008; Gonçalves, 2012).

Finally, the relation between retention and sociodemographic data can be seen in aspects as:

- Gender. Both, male and female members, have different tastes in activities;
- Age group, the different groups seek for different activities;
- Income, people with financial problem are not likely to join a health club, different groups different priorities;
- Qualifications, educated individuals seek for a better quality of life, sport is a way of improving it (Gonçalves, 2012).

As far as consumption variables, retention is influenced by: money spend per month in the club, a member that spends money, beside the fee, demonstrates satisfaction towards the service. Also, the frequency as well as duration of training, are influencers, the more often members go and the longer stay, transmits an idea members enjoy the space (Gonçalves, 2012).

To overcome these obstacles, strategies with the aim of retaining the members need to be implemented, once inside the organization customers deserve even more attention as they have more value. Some strategies, which can be used by health clubs to increase retention rate, are related with: improvements in the facilities, the continuous investment in equipment and maintenance. Moreover, expand the offer with more diversity in the activities, gives the opportunity not just to encourage cross and up selling but also makes the consumer even more committed with the health club. Over time allows the staff to create a more personalized connexion with the customer. In fact, *“it is through the staff that the gym can positively influence the perception of the company in the customers mind”* (Schmitt, 2004; Ferreira, 2012: 15), simple aspects as memorize their names, make them feel welcome or anticipate certain situation or behaviours as they already know the customer and what he/she is looking for (Ferreira 2012).

This connection established with the customers, is an incentive to keep going to the health club. If the member feels welcomed in the health club, is more likely to talk about it, adding value to the service, turning into credible way of promoting the service, the word-of-mouth is the most trustworthy way of advertising.

However, these strategies do not always result, and health club often see customers leaving for competitors or simply for other activities. When this happens, managers need

to analyse the reasons for leaving, realize what were the motives leading the members to cancel.

### **2.7.3 | Cancellation of memberships**

Associated with the concept of retention, but for opposing reasons is the cancellation of memberships. When a member, cancels their membership means that for some reason, they no longer want to be connected with that health club.

As previously said, comprehending the reasons that lead the customer to rescind the contract, should be turn into a competitive advantage as it can give an insight about the health clubs. What is not working in the performance of the service. Establishing a relationship with the customer is a key point to know and understand their motivations and behaviours (Ferreira, 2012). According to Caldeira (2006; Ferreira 2012: 15) refers that the *“motivations, expectations and frustrations in relationships contribute greatly to the favourable or unfavourable outcome of client satisfaction”* and consequently to their retention or rescission of contract with the health club.

A study developed by Vanderburg, in 2010, defined a series of reasons that lead customer giving up going to the health club: *“1% for death; 3% because they change their residence; 13% go to competitors; 15% are dissatisfied with the product or services and 68% leave for the indifference”* (Vanderburg, 2010; Ferreira, 2012: 15-16). As it is possible to verify a large percentage (68%), belongs to the members that do not care about it, which means the experience is not relevant. If the health club does not know the preferences and desires of the consumer, they won't be able to match and fulfil their needs, which is why there is a need to establish a relationship with the customer, this is one of biggest problem for the health clubs and the reason for a low retention rate (Ferreira, 2012).

Beside these, other points were mentioned for cancelling, as the lack of time, financial problem, the emotional motivation to work out (Ferreira, 2012). *“The problem of the causes that lead to dropping out of the gym is an issue that gyms and fitness clubs have long tried to understand and consequently avoid”* (Cavique & Pinheiro, 2015: 33). In order to better understand the patterns of withdrawal and know how to anticipate them it is necessary to make a characterization of the clients, starting by the development of a database with relevant information to build a profitable and lasting relationship (Cavique & Pinheiro, 2015).

Beside the initial information requested in the enrolment, it may also be asked to point the main motivations to sign up, thereby it is possible to better match the offer. Another way to get relevant information, from members, is to make surveys to evaluate the quality of the service. The results give insights not just about what need improvements but also aspects that are missing or expectations from members. The purpose is to take advantage of suggestions that are made by the clients to renovate the service.

Through this it is possible to have privileged information about members, the better the health club knows about member and their needs, the less likely will be their desire to leave. The consumer looks for a change if he/she feels there is another offer that satisfies them more. For a customer an emotional commitment towards the company translates into repurchases and in positive word-of-mouth (Caldeira, 2006; Patrícia de Jesus, 2014).

Other industries have already begun to use sensory marketing strategies as a way to improve the service and differentiate from the competitors.

## **2.8 | Examples from other industries**

Several industries, as banking, automobile, rural tourism or spas are some examples of services using multisensory strategies. To improve the experience and encourage the consumption. In these services, managers seek to create incentives to attract consumers attention in a different way from the traditional one.

Ribeiro (2016), intended to analyse how could a sensory strategy, be implemented in a banking institution, influencing customers satisfaction and retention. In this case the focus of the senses was on “*three main factors: environmental, social and design*” (Ribeiro, 2016: 98).

In practical terms, the strategies addressed the five senses, e.g., having comfortable chairs, plants and decorative objects that relaxed the environment were used to stimulate the touch sense. To promote a warm, quiet environment and eliminate the stress of waiting, warmer lights in shades of yellow, were included in the visual effects. To help minimizing stress factors, play an ambient music, based on calm and relaxed sounds. In order to keep a pleasant smell in the room, the focus was on having light perfumes and a good ventilation system. Also, have available water, tea or coffee to stimulate the taste sense (Ribeiro, 2016).

Regarding the automobile sector, the author focused only on two senses and how they influenced the consumer. Vaz (2017: iii), among other objectives proposed to “*perceive the effect of the olfactory stimulus on the car's evaluation and the propensity to purchase it and to identify the impact of the sensory stimulus on the driving behaviour, in terms of the maximum speed reached and fuel consumptions of the vehicle*”.

The distinctive scent of a fresh new car was something that consumers consider to be natural first impact, because it is a smell that is only found exclusively in this product, “*is perceived as a natural element of the environment*” (Verma 2014; Vaz, 2017: 33). The sound of the engine was also pointed out by consumers, as an important aspect in the experience. Most of the participants in the test-drive, considered the sound of the engine as a positive aspect, making them more willing to set foot on the accelerator, since the sound of the motor as very enjoyable (Vaz, 2017). Once again, the use of the senses to affect the consumer experience was proved to be positive.

In the case of rural tourism, the objective was to make the experience as rural as possible. The idea was, through the senses, “*design of an environment that enhances desirable experiences and for the segmentation of tourists*” (Agapito, Almeida, Mendes & Valle, 2014: 611).

The strategies developed focused on the regional food, by promoting local dishes. This is a way of attracting customers to the region, with the influence of the palate. Also, through the reproduction of elements from the surrounding nature, inside the hotels appealing to customers vision. Introducing the customers to the interesting points of the area make the clients have a closer feeling towards the experience of living in a similar place, including natural activities from the countryside (Agapito, Almeida, Mendes & Valle, 2014), the combination of these stimuli promotes a different experience for customers.

Lastly in spas the experience is completely absorbed by the senses, in this case the objective was “*to identify the use of sensorial marketing in spas and understand the effect of sensory stimuli on the perception of experience and consumer behaviour*” (Mesquita, 2016: iv). The whole experience is about developing a pleasant and relaxing atmosphere for customers.

This can be achieved through combinations of stimuli to influence consumers perception of the space. In spas, some strategies include: candles, light colours and a



darker space, reproduction of sounds from the ocean, jungle or a musical instruments to increase relating levels. Aromas from mint or cinnamon are considered as very relaxing. Regarding touch, the masseur's hands, the softness of the towels and texture and temperature of the oils used are stimuli to consider in the experience. Mesquita (2016: 51), concluded that *“the senses are used in an integrated and homogeneous way, consciously or unconsciously, however, they must be coherent and interlinked approach”*, these stimuli should arouse in consumer consciousness a behaviour that encourages them the intention to repeat (Mesquita, 2016).

Concluding, one common factor among these examples is the positive impact of the senses in the service provided. In all cases, instead of implementing strategies using only one sense, it was proved to be more effective the combination of more than one sense, a multisensory strategy.

In general, the stimuli had a positive impact in the consumers experience. The satisfaction with the senses translated in higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty towards the service. A pleasant atmosphere facilitates the predisposition to comeback and the repetition of the purchase.

As it was possible to verify, the application of a sensorial marketing strategy added more value to the service. If well implemented in the customers experience, it can become a competitive advantage, as proved by the several industries that used the senses and achieved positive results.

### 3 | Methodology

The methodology is an expression used to illustrate the “*procedures, tools and paths*” (Marinho de Aragão & Neta, 2017: 10) used to “*explain and discuss a phenomenon based on the verification of one or more hypotheses*” (Praça, 2015: 73).

The purpose of this chapter is to describe how the data is going to be collected, the research approach used as well as the methods implemented. “Through this insight precautions can be taken, increasing validity and reliability of the study” (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Nielsen, 2015: 27).

#### 3.1 | Data Collection

The data collection is a process that involves the research of reliable and relevant information with the purpose of helping to clarify the issues previously raised, by characterizing the problem, interpreting the results as well as making a prognosis regarding the subject in question (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006; Parveen & Showkat, 2017).

For the purpose of this research two types of data were collected: primary and secondary.

#### 3.2 | Secondary data

First it was carried out a **secondary data** collection, which resulted in the literature review chapter. The secondary data is all the existing sets of data, developed by several authors, which are used to support and explain the problem under discussion (Dowsett & Greenhoot, 2012).

Therefore, a thorough search about the topic is necessary, an **exploratory investigation** will provide an insight making the reader more familiar with the topic and helps designing the hypothesis (Gil, 1991; Lúcia da Silva & Menezes, 2005).

Besides this, an **explanatory research** is implemented with the purpose of analysing if there is a relationship between the variables established (Zikmund, 2000) as well as identify causes that can help to explain the reason for those situations to happen (Gil, 1991; Lúcia da Silva & Menezes, 2005).

This follows the logical structure of a **deductive reasoning method**, where hypotheses are developed and tested through the most appropriate methodology (Khazaei & Zalaghi, 2016), as it starts with the theoretical explanation of the topic followed by

the design of the hypothesis and test the validity of the study, ending with the main ideas that help confirming the assumptions made.

Therefore, the questions under analysis are:

1. What is the importance attributed to each sense (touch, smell, vision and audition), based on the opinion of each group?
2. Is the opinion about the relevancy given to the senses a reason to cancel the registration?
3. What are the senses that have a positive and a negative influence in the customers experience, according to each group's opinion?
4. Are gender or age directly related with respondents' opinion about the importance given to the senses?
5. Relationship between the frequency each member goes to the health club and the propensity to cancel their membership due to existing sensorial stimuli.
6. For those who are not anymore in a health club, what were the reasons to leave?
7. Respondent's profile from each group.

These were the questions that guided the study, enabling to draw some conclusions regarding consumers' opinions, this will give information to health clubs about the aspects to be considered as relevant and less relevant in acquisition, retention and cancellation of memberships.

### 3.3 | Primary data

In addition to this, a **primary data** collection was necessary, which is information gathered by the author himself, considered to be more dependable (Parveen & Showkat, 2017). It was necessary to carry it out because no data regarding the subject was found and it is important to collect this kind of information to draw more precise conclusions.

The primary data can be collected by the researcher based on two approaches: **qualitative methods or/and quantitative methods**, they will help to assess, verify and understand the data collected (Wainer, 2007).

In the **qualitative approach**, the aim is to help in the exploratory research, formulating the hypothesis and enlighten concepts. However, it does not give a concrete answer (Akhtar, 2016) instead it makes interpretations about the situation and attributes

meanings to the results (Lúcia da Silva & Menezes, 2005). For this, techniques like: interviews, focus groups, observation fields, case study or ethnographies could be used (Parveen & Showkat, 2017). In this case none of the techniques were implemented.

At the same time there are **quantitative methods**, which are “*generally used in a deductive study: the hypotheses are tested, and the results are interpreted from the theory previously researched*” (Santos, 1999: 402) that can be applied, it may be through interviews or questionnaires (Manzato & Santos, 2012). They intend to “measure opinions, reactions, feelings, habits and attitudes” (Manzato & Santos, 2012: 7) presenting the results in numbers for the statistical analysis.

In this case it was decided to focus on quantitative methods, specifically questionnaire, which is one of the techniques that gathers varied group of respondents (Parveen & Showkat, 2017). For the analysis of the data collected it was used a software called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

A questionnaire is an “*instrument that, tries to evaluate or measure a variable*” (Wainer, 2007: 13) through a set of questions related to the topic, with the intention of knowing respondents “*opinions, interests, personality aspects and biographical information*” (Yaremko, Harari, Harrison & Lynn, 1986; Günther, 2003: 2).

This questionnaire was constructed with the aim of perceiving the attitudes and opinions of consumers (Günther, 2003), in this case regarding the influence of sensorial stimuli in their decision making.

### 3.3.1 | Design

To start the questionnaire is divided in two parts (Figure 1), one to know the respondent, with general questions and another to know their opinion about the relevancy of senses in health clubs. This creates a logical and organized sequence of questions (Young & Lundberg, 1998; Lúcia da Silva & Menezes, 2005).

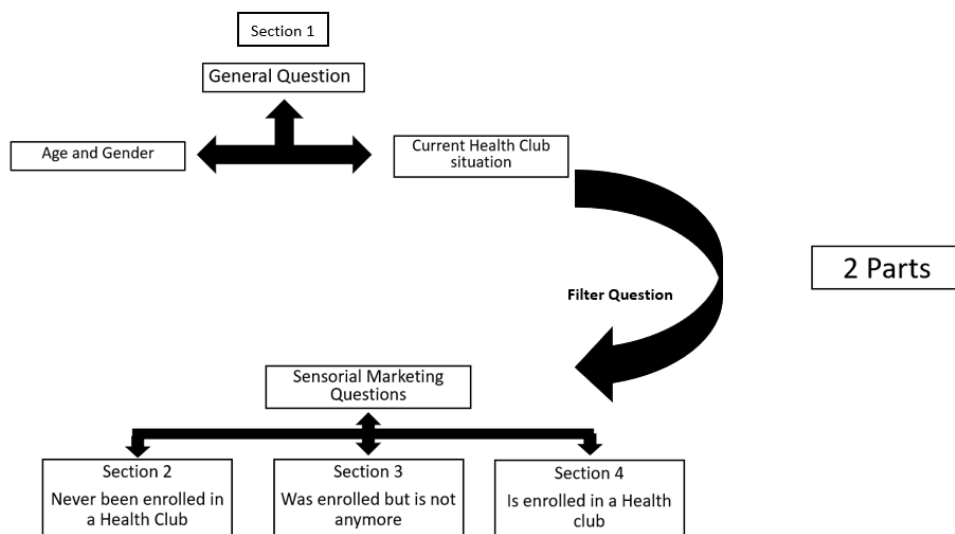
This questionnaire is composed only by closed answers, presenting three styles of answer: “**multiple choice**, with a list of options to choose from, with **two choices**: yes or no” (Lúcia da Silva & Menezes, 2005: 34) and to **sort** with a specific scale, created to obtain an order in relation to the importance that each sense has, designated as an ordering scale (Correia, Fernandes & Mendes, s.d.), it goes from 1- Very important, 2- Important, 3- Slightly important to 4- Not important. By choosing a closed one it has some

advantages as “*more predictable answers and facilitates the organization of the data*” (Marinho de Aragão & Neta, 2017: 36).

In the first part, beside personal questions, as age and gender, there is a question that will define the path the respondents will follow, (Appendix 1). According to Manzato & Santos (2012), those are called filter questions, they will categorize respondents and forward them to the corresponding section, according to their answer.

This question will divide the respondents into three groups: i) those who are enrolled – Retention (Appendix 1, Section 4), ii) those who have been, but are not anymore – Cancellation (Appendix 1, Section 3) and iii) those who have never been – Acquisition (Appendix 1, Section 2).

From here three sections will be presented one for each group, through this it will be possible to analyse how they perceive the senses as well as identify, within each group, which stimuli have a positive and negative influence. Enabling to draw more precise conclusions.



**Figure 1** - Structure of the questionnaire. Source: elaborated by the author.

### 3.3.2 | Sample

According to Afonso & Nunes (2011:2), “*the population is the group that is intended to be studied and has certain common characteristics*”, in the current research the population is the Portuguese population, since no restrictions were defined and any person is relevant to the study.

Taking this into consideration, the sample is composed of subgroups from the population (Afonso & Nunes, 2012), in this case, the sample will be divided into 3 subgroups regarding their current health club membership: those who are enrolled, those who have been but are not anymore and those who have never been.

The questionnaire was made available to respond in two ways: through digital platforms such as social networks and email and in the streets of the district of Lisbon, asking people to respond.

Hereupon, the sample is characterized as follows: 308 valid responses, from both genders and with ages distributed among the six defined intervals. From those replies: 110 are currently enrolled in a health club, 118 were enrolled but are not anymore and 80 have never been member of one (Figure 2C).

## 4 | Results and Discussion

This project aims to study the impact of each sense on the number of health clubs' customers. Can they be associated with a positive or a negative experience? Which sense play a bigger part during work out sessions? Are the senses a source of competitive advantage? All these questions will be addressed in this project.

Although this strategy has been applied in other industries (*see* Literature Review), it was never tested in the sports area, specifically in fitness. Here, we study for the first time how it will be possible to take advantage of this point in the processes of acquisition, retention or cancellation of members in health clubs.

In this section an analysis of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire will be presented. Data analysis was performed based on statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation and independence tests. After sample characterization, results will be shown and discussed based on 7 research questions, namely:

1. What is the importance attributed to each sense (touch, smell, vision and audition), based on the opinion of each group?
2. Is the opinion about the relevancy given to the senses a reason to cancel the registration?
3. What are the senses that have a positive and a negative influence in the customers experience, according to each group's opinion?
4. Are gender or age directly related with respondents' opinion about the importance given to the senses?
5. Relationship between the frequency each member goes to the health club and the propensity to cancel their membership due to existing sensorial stimuli.
6. For those who are not anymore in a health club, what were the reasons to leave?
7. Respondent's profile from each group.

### Sample characterization

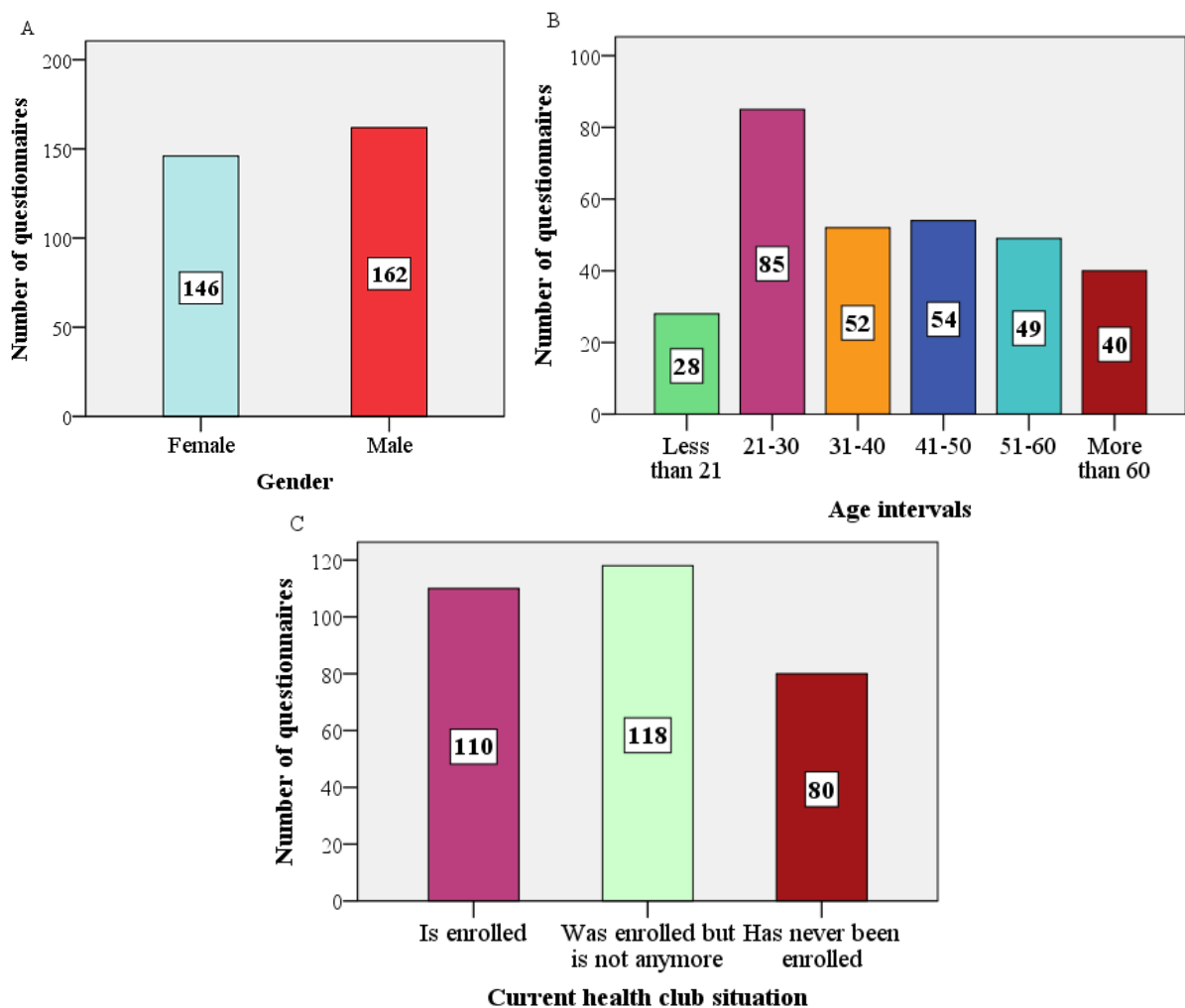
In order to start the data analysis, it is important to have a deeper knowledge about who our is sample. Therefore, and using a descriptive analysis, sample was characterized based on gender, age and health club situation. Overall, 308 questionnaires were obtained and after verification, all questionnaires were considered valid.

Concerning gender, 146 questionnaires were from women and 162 were from men, corresponding to 47.4% and 52.6% of the sample, respectively (Figure 2A; Appendix 1- Table 14).

Regarding age, six intervals were defined: i) less than 21 years old, ii) ten unit intervals from 21 until 60, and iii) more than 60 years old (Figure 2B; Appendix 1- Table15). The most represented group was from 21-30 years old, corresponding to 27.6% of the respondents.

Concerning health club situation, the sample was further clustered into three groups (Figure 2C; Appendix 1- Table 16):

- 110 are enrolled in a health club, corresponding to 35.7%;
- 118 were enrolled but are not anymore, corresponding to 38.3%;
- 80 were never enrolled in one, corresponding to 26.0%.



**Figure 2 -** Number of questionnaires by gender (A), age (B) and health club situation (C).



In order to verify the variety of the sample, a crosstabulation between the variables “health club situation” with both “gender” and “age” was developed. This analysis shows the frequency of co-occurrence in a contingency table (White, 2004).

In terms of gender and respondents condition, the majority of male respondents were enrolled but they are not anymore, corresponding to 69. Moreover, 58 are enrolled, whereas 35 of them have never been enrolled. In the female side is slightly different, where most of them are currently enrolled corresponding to 52 (Table 6A). The least represented group is the same as male, 45 have never been enrolled. Concerning the age and the situation, the most representative group is between 21-30 years old and enrolled in a health club, being 34. Meanwhile only 8 of the respondents are less than 21 and have never been enrolled before, being the least represented group (Table 6B).

A

Count		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
Current health club situation	Is enrolled	52	58	110
	Was enrolled but is not anymore	49	69	118
	Has never been enrolled	45	35	80
	Total	146	162	308

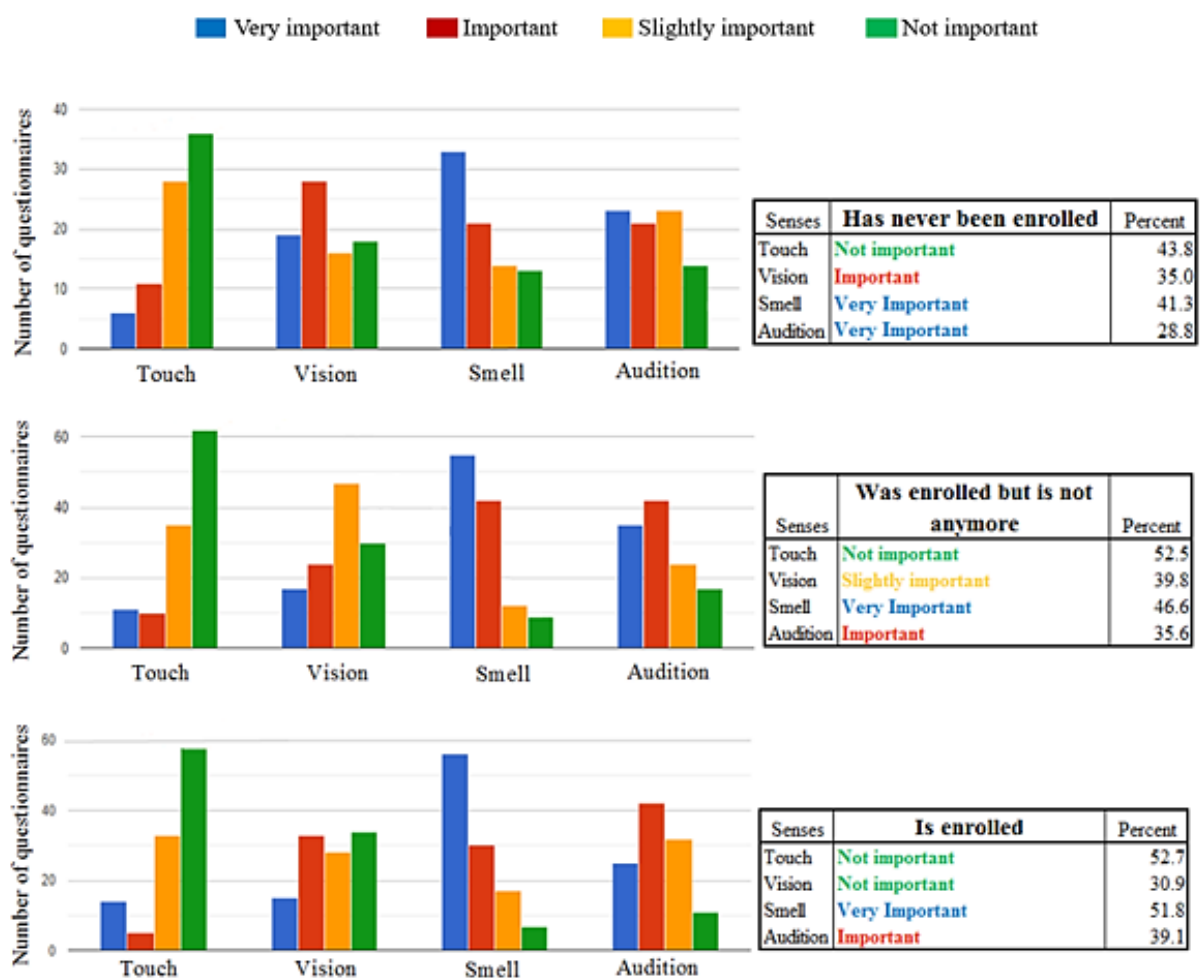
B

Count	Current health club situation			Total
	Is enrolled	Was enrolled but is not anymore	Has never been enrolled	
Less than 21	11	8	9	28
21 - 30	34	31	20	85
31 - 40	20	21	11	52
41 - 50	14	25	15	54
51 - 60	20	14	15	49
More than 60	11	19	10	40
Total	110	118	80	308

**Table 6** - Cross tabulation between “current health club situation” and “gender” (A) and “age” and “current health club situation” (B). Results are represented as frequency.

**1. What is the importance attributed to each sense (touch, smell, vision and audition), based on the opinion of each group?**

The purpose of this research question is to identify, which sense is considered more and less important. Results were divided depending on the respondent health club situation (is enrolled, was enrolled but is not anymore or has never been enrolled) (Appendix 3). In Figure 3 is represented the importance attributed to touch, smell, vision and audition for each group. The importance scale considered was “not important”, “slightly important”, “important” and “very important”. Moreover, results were also shown as percentage for each sense studied.



**Figure 3** - Results are divided into three already mentioned and shown as frequency and percentage. In tables are represented the highest percentage of each sense associated with the given importance.

Looking to each group separately, there are a few points that needed to be highlighted:

From those who have never been in a health club, is possible to see that touch is considered as “not important”, whereas smell is considered to “very important” with 43.8% and 28.8%, respectively.

The only group that assigned an importance level to each sense were those who have been enrolled but are not anymore. From the 118 questionnaires, smell had 46.6% of the votes as “very important”, followed by audition with 35.6% considered “important”, next it was vision 39.8% voted as “slightly important” and finally, touch 52.5% of the votes were in “not important”.

Also, the 110 respondents that are enrolled in a health club have different opinions about what sense is considered ‘not important’. Both touch and vision with 52.7% and 30.9%, respectively were highlighted by the questionnaires.

Overall and despite groups, all respondents considered as “very important” the smell with 145 votes. On the other hand, the “not important” corresponds to touch with 155 votes. Regarding vision and audition, the first is considered “slightly important” with 92 votes and the second is considered as “important” with 106 votes (Table 7).

Count	Senses			
	Touch	Vision	Smell	Audition
Very Important	31	49	145	83
Important	26	85	91	106
Slightly important	96	92	43	77
Not important	155	82	29	42
Total	308	308	308	308

**Table 7-** Number of questionnaires according to the importance scale attributed to each sense. Results are represented as frequency.

**2. Is the opinion about the relevancy given to the senses a reason to cancel the registration?**

The main goal of this research question is to verify if the variables relevancy of senses and intention to cancel are dependent or not. Therefore, and based on the respondents who are enrolled in a health club, the question underlying is if there is any relationship between the relevancy of the senses and the tendency to cancel the membership.

To test the association of these two variables a non-parametric test will be performed, which is used when categorical variables are present (Afonso & Nunes, 2011). In this case it is comprised two nominal variables.

Moreover, under these conditions the most appropriate test is the chi square, since it works with both dependent and independent categorical variables. The purpose of this test will be to verify if there is evidence of relationship between the two variables (Boggis & Marshall, 2016).

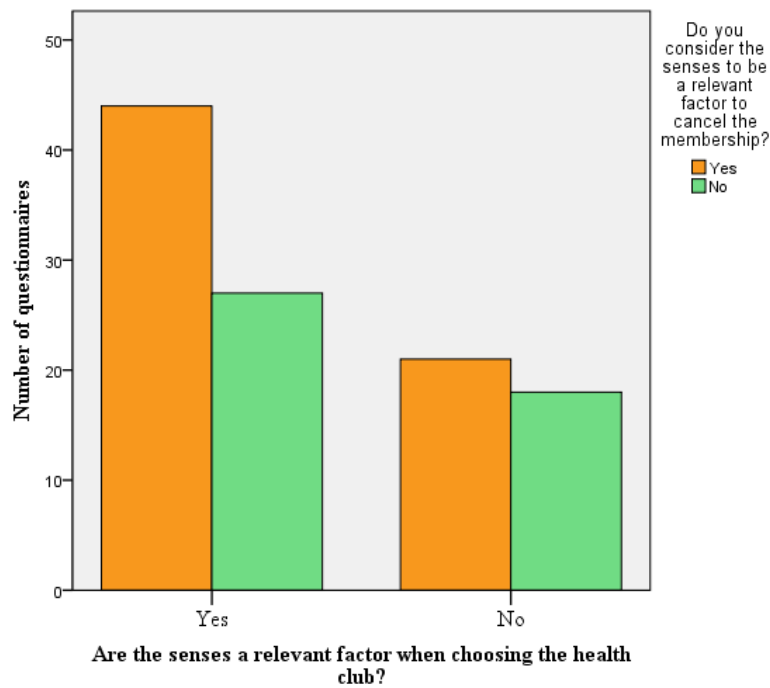
So, according to Afonso & Nunes (2011) the hypothesis definition is done as follows:

- Null hypothesis = The variables are independent, “relevancy of the senses” is not related to “intention to cancel”;
- Alternative hypothesis = They are not independent, which means there are evidences of a relationship between “relevancy of the senses” and “intention to cancel”.

The results of the test are presented in Table 8 and Figure 4. From the 110 respondents only 44 consider they would cancel the membership due to the negative impact of the senses. On the opposite side, 18 respondents affirm the senses are not relevant, not even to cancel the membership.

			Do you consider the senses a relevant factor to cancel the membership?		Total
			No	Yes	
Are the senses relevant for those who are enrolled?	No	Count % within Are stimuli relevant factor to cancel?	18 40.0%	21 32.3%	38 35.5%
	Yes	Count % within Are stimuli relevant factor to cancel?	27 60.0%	44 67.7%	71 64.5%
Total		Count % within Are stimuli relevant factor to cancel?	45 100.0%	65 100.0%	110 100.0%

**Table 8** - Cross tabulation between “Are the senses relevant for those who are enrolled?” and “Do you consider the senses a relevant factor to cancel the membership?”. results are represented as frequency and percentage.



**Figure 4** - Distribution of responses from who are enrolled according to “Are the senses relevant for those who are enrolled?” and “Do you consider the senses a relevant factor to cancel the membership?”. The results are represented as frequency.

To test if there are any signs of a connexion between the variables, the chi-square test of independence was applied using a significance level of 0.05 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

As it is possible to verify in Table 9, even though it is a table computed 2x2, it fulfils the chi-square test requirements. As expected, frequencies are greater than 5, therefore the Pearson chi-square and the continuity correction values should be considered (Chagas, 2016).

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	.688 <sup>a</sup>	1	.407		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.393	1	.531		
Likelihood Ratio	.685	1	.408		
Fisher's Exact Test				.425	.265
Linear-by-Linear Association	.681	1	.409		
N of Valid Cases	110				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.95.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Table 9** - Results from the Chi-square Test between “Are the senses relevant for those who are enrolled?” and “Do you consider the senses a relevant factor to cancel the membership?”.

So, for a significance level of 0.05 ( $\alpha=0.05$ ), if  $\text{Sig} \leq \alpha$ , there are statistics evidences, to reject the null hypothesis. However, in this case the both Pearson chi-square and “Yates” continuity correction sig values are greater than 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected, and the variables are not related.

In conclusion, although members may consider senses as a relevant issue, it will not lead to the cancellation of the membership.

**3. What are the senses that have a positive and a negative influence in the customers experience, according to each group's opinion?**

In order to analyse this question, the statistical technique used was based on a customized table for each group. This method counts the number of votes each option had. The main goal here is to determine which stimuli and combination of stimuli have a positive and negative impact on customers' experience. To facilitate this analysis, a list of stimuli related to each sense was developed, as follow:

- Audition: noise pollution (conversation between people) and music;
- Vision: distribution of the machines (room layout), colours, design, and landscape;
- Smell: from sweat, from cleaning products (bleach) and environment scent (air freshener sprays);
- Touch: texture of materials (machine handles).

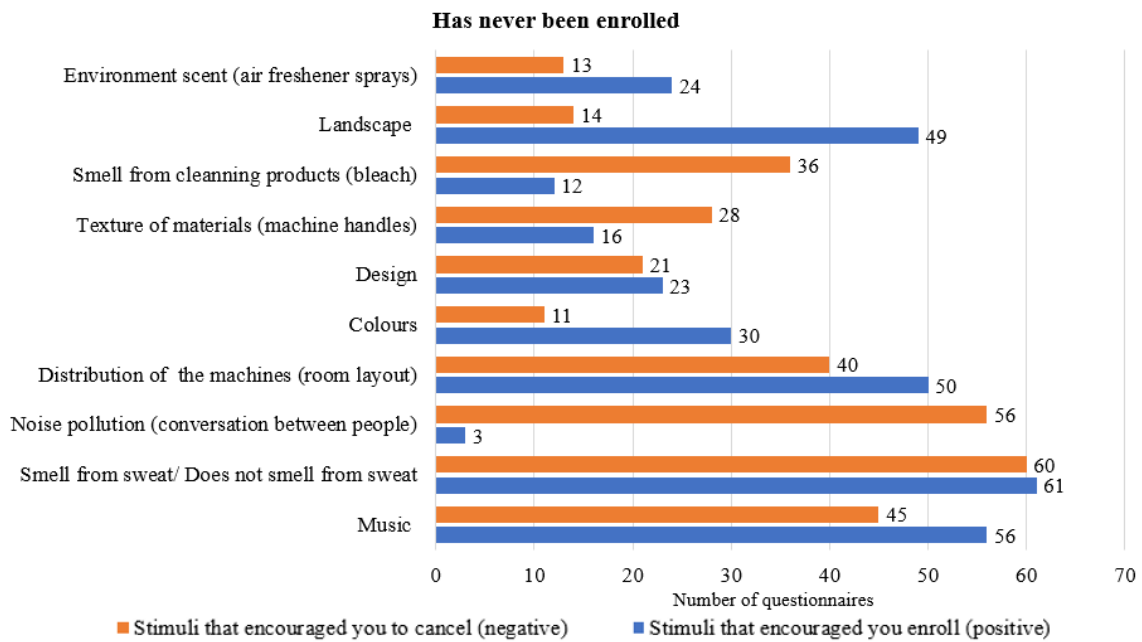
The results will be explained as individual stimuli as well as combinations of them. The list of all combinations will be presented in the Appendix 4.

For those who **Have never been enrolled** two questions were created, one to identify which stimuli would positively encourage the enrolment and another with a possible reason that could lead to cancellation. One condition was applied in this question, a limit of four out of eleven possible choices per respondent, resulting in 330 combinations.

According to the results (Figure 5; Appendix 4- Table 20 & 21), two different aspects should be highlighted:

In a positive way the stimuli that had more votes correspond to music, not smelling from sweat, distribution of the machines (room layout) and landscape, which are included in the most voted combination.

In a negative way, one of the stimuli does not belong to the combination with more votes, the texture of materials (machine handles) is in the place of smell from cleaning products (bleach). This combination is then composed by music, smell from sweat, noise pollution (conversation between people) and texture of the materials (machine handles).



**Figure 5** - Frequency of each stimuli voted by respondents who have never been enrolled. Stimuli were positively or negatively voted based on the experience.

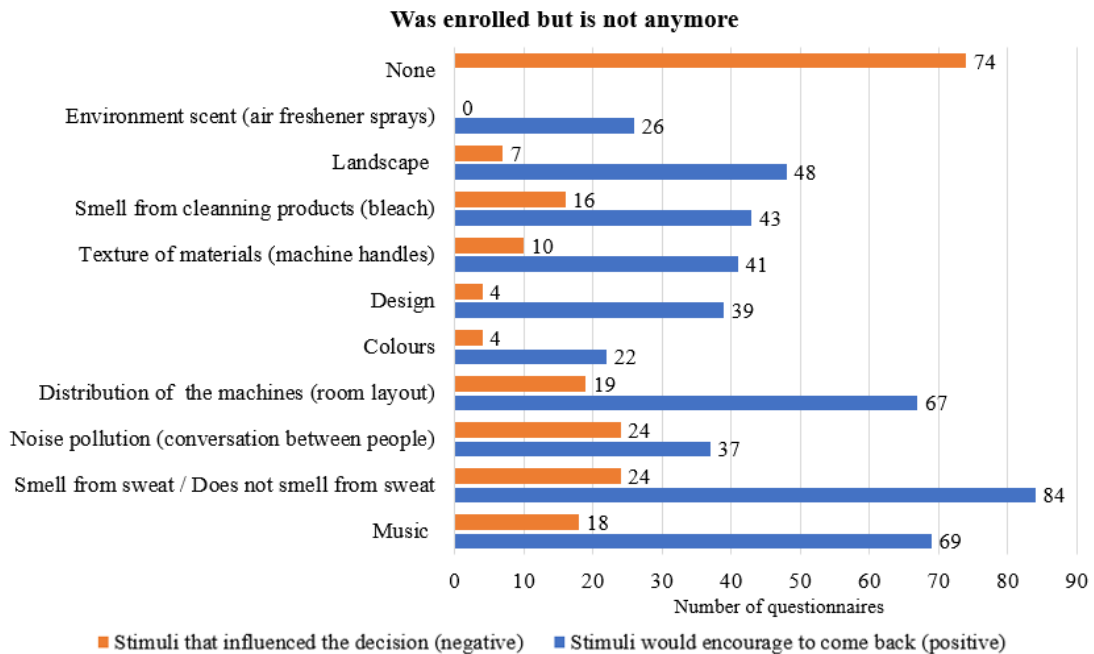
Considering the respondents that **Have been enrolled but are not anymore**, once again two questions were developed, one to identify the stimuli that could have had an influence on the decision to cancel. Here two types of answers were possible either the respondent answered "none" or he/she could choose up to four options from the list, this means there could be around 385 combinations. The second question aimed at identifying the stimuli that would encourage them to re-enrol. In this case it was asked to choose four from the list of ten, making 210 possible combinations (Figure 6; Appendix 4- Table 22 & 23).

For the factors that may had influence when cancelling, the most voted option was none. However, in terms of the stimuli, the more voted were not the same that created the combination, as the noise pollution (conversation between people) was among the top four and did not belong to the most voted combination. In there it was: smell form sweat, distribution of the machines (room layout) and music.

On the other hand, the top four stimuli that would have a positive influence in the re-enrolment would be: does not smell from sweat, music, distribution of the machines (room layout) and landscape, which does not totally correspond to the most voted combination. Moreover, does not smell from sweat, music, does not smell from cleaning



products (bleach) and the noise pollution (conversation between people) were also part of the combination with more votes.

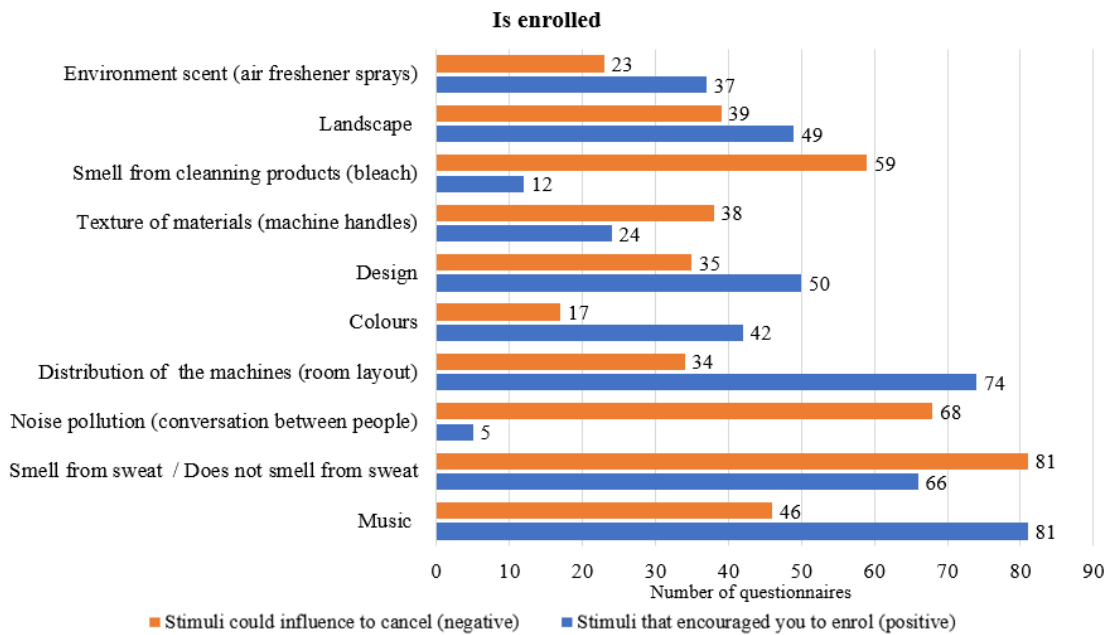


**Figure 6** - Frequency of each stimuli voted by respondents who were enrolled but are not anymore. Stimuli were positively or negatively voted based on the experience.

Finally, the opinion of the respondents that **Are enrolled in a health club**, the same concept was applied. Two questions one to identify which ones positively influence their experience and other to find out which have a negative impact. In these questions it was requested to select four out of the ten options from the list, giving 210 possible combinations (Figure 7; Appendix 4- Table 24 & 25).

What they consider to be pleasant stimuli in their experience, the top four more voted, music, distribution of the machines (room layout), does not smell from sweat and design. This is the same stimuli present in the most voted combination.

On the other hand, the top stimuli that influence negatively the experience were: smell form sweat, noise pollution (conversation between people), smell from cleaning products (bleach) and music. However, as happened before, it does not match most voted combination, which is formed by smell form sweat, landscape, design and colours.



**Figure 7** - Frequency of each stimuli voted by respondents who are enrolled. Stimuli were positively or negatively voted based on the experience.

#### 4. Are gender or age directly related with respondents’ opinion about the importance given to the senses?

This question was analysed through the following approach:

- Correlation between variables “gender” and “Are the senses relevant”;
- Correlation between variables “age” and “Are the senses relevant”.

To “determine the level of association between variables, measuring the relationship that exists” (Pereira, 2011; Gouveia, 2012: 87) a correlation matrix was developed.

Both situations can be tested through the Pearson correlation coefficient and, according to Nica (2016) the decision to reject or not the null hypothesis is based on the *p-value*, as:

- If the *p-value* is lower than the significance level the null hypothesis should be rejected;
- If the *p-value* is higher than the significance level the null hypothesis should not be rejected.

For all tests the significance level considered was 5%,  $\alpha= 0.05$ .

#### 4.1. Gender

It was intended to test if the following hypothesis should be rejected or not:

- Null hypothesis = The respondents' gender is not related to the importance given to senses.
- Alternative = The respondents' gender is related to the importance given to senses.

According to the rules of the test, if the significance level is lower or equal to 0.05, i.e.,  $\text{sig} \leq \alpha$  the correlation is statistically significant and, therefore there is a relationship between the variables (Nica, 2016).

In this case, the result of the  $p\text{-value}=0.400$ , which means  $p\text{-value}$  is higher than significance level defined, i.e.,  $0.400 > 0.05$ . (Table 10)

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there is no statistical evidence of a relationship between variables. The null hypothesis is not rejected. Consequently, the opinion of the respondents about the importance of the senses is not related to the gender.

		Gender	Are the senses relevant when choosing the health club?
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.400
	N	308	308
Are the senses relevant when choosing the health club?	Pearson Correlation	.048	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.400	
	N	308	308

**Table 10** - Results from the Pearson Correlation test between “gender” and “are the senses relevant when choosing the health club?”.

**4.2.Age**

Regarding age, the same test as well as the conditions were applied in this case between the variables “age” and “opinion about the importance of the senses”.

The hypotheses under analysis as the following:

- Null hypothesis = The respondents’ age is not related to the importance given to senses.
- Alternative = The respondents’ age is related to the importance given to senses.

Following, the same thought, with significance level of lower or equal than 0.05 ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ), the conclusion should be to reject the null hypothesis. As the results demonstrate, the *p-value* is 0.018 (Table 11).

According to the results it is possible to verify that there is statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Consequently, the respondents’ opinion about the importance of the senses is related to age.

		Age	Are the senses relevant when choosing the health club?
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.135
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.018
	N	308	308
Are the senses relevant when choosing the health club?	Pearson Correlation	.135	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	
	N	308	308

**Table 11** - Results from the Pearson Correlation test between “age” and “are the senses relevant when choosing the health club?”.

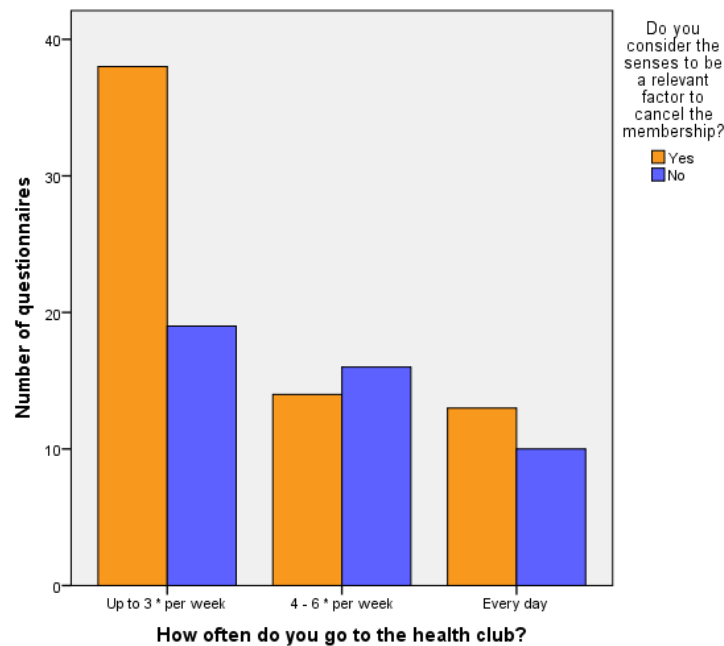
**5. Relationship between the frequency each member goes to the health club and the propensity to cancel their membership due to existing sensorial stimuli.**

The chi-square test was applied to determine the dependence or independence of the variables “intention to cancel due to sensory stimuli” and “frequency each member goes to the health club”. According to the crosstab table (Table 12; Figure 8) 110 responses, from those who are enrolled in a health club were analysed. Considering the frequencies’ results:

- Those who go up to three times per week, 66.7% consider the senses a relevant factor to cancel;
- For the respondents that go between 4 to 6 times per week 53.3% of them do not consider the senses a key factor to cancel;
- Regarding the members that go every day, 56.5% affirm that senses can be considered a cancellation factor.

			Do you consider the senses a relevant factor to cancel the membership?		Total
			Yes	No	
How often do you go to the health club?	Up to 3 × per week	Count % within How often do you go to the gym?	39 67.2%	19 32.8%	58 100.0%
	4 - 6 × per week	Count % within How often do you go to the gym?	14 48.3%	15 51.7%	29 100.0%
	Every day	Count % within How often do you go to the gym?	13 56.5%	10 43.5%	23 100.0%
Total		Count % within How often do you go to the gym?	65 60.0%	45 40.0%	110 100.0%

**Table 12** - Cross tabulation between “how often do you go to the health club?” and “do you consider the senses a relevant factor to cancel the membership?”. Results are shown as frequency and percentage.



**Figure 8** - Distribution of responses from who are enrolled according to “how often do you go to the health club?” and “do you consider the senses a relevant factor to cancel the membership?”. Results are represented as frequency.

Regarding the chi-square test, as previously mentioned it intends to verify whether the variables under analysis are dependent or not. So, the hypotheses tested are:

- Null hypothesis: The intention to cancel is independent of the number of times that respondents go to the health club.
- Alternative hypothesis: The intention to cancel is dependent of the number of times that respondents go to the health club.

In order to verify if there is a dependence between the variables, the rule is if the significance level is less or equal to 0.05, i.e.  $\text{Sig} \leq \alpha$  ( $\alpha=0.05$ ), there are statistics evidences to reject the null hypothesis (Boggis & Marshall, 2016) and, therefore variables are related to each other.

In this case, a significance level of 0.218 was achieved (Table 13) and, the null hypothesis should be not rejected - the two variables are independent. Therefore, there is no statistical evidence between the intention to cancel and the frequency respondents go to the health club.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 - sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.044 <sup>a</sup>	2	.218
Linear - by - Linear Association	3.037	2	.219
N of valid cases	110		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9,20.

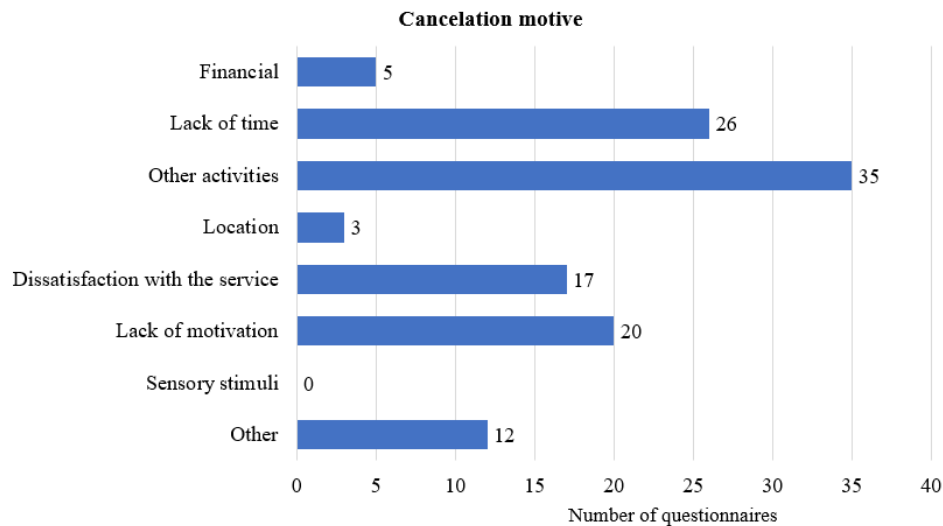
**Table 13** - Results from the Chi-square Test between “how often do you go to the health club?” and “do you consider the senses a relevant factor to cancel the membership?”.

**6. For those who are not anymore in a health club, what were the reasons to leave?**

Through the literature review it was possible to verify there are a number of reasons that could lead to membership cancellation. For the purpose of this research and, considering literature review, a set of options was developed namely: financial, lack of time, other activities, location dissatisfaction with the service, lack of motivation, sensorial stimuli and other (Figure 9; Appendix 5- Table 26).

It was asked to the group of respondents that has been enrolled (118 respondents) the reason why they decided to cancel, for this case the answers were limited to the set developed.

According to the results presented in Figure 9, neither the location nor the stimuli were the main reasons why the customers decided to leave the health club. The most voted reasons were lack of time and the development of other activities beside fitness. On the opposite side, the less voted were location and sensory stimuli.



**Figure 9** - Number of questionnaires per cancelation motive. Votes were collected from who have been enrolled but are not anymore. The results are shown as frequency.

### 7. Respondent’s profile from each group.

Based on the analysis performed and the information collected from the questionnaire, it was possible to create a profile for each group of respondents.

The following Figure 10 is a summary of what characterizes each group based on their opinions of where the senses and stimuli can play an important role in the fitness industry.

Despite different experiences, it is possible to find that all groups shared the same opinion for instance, when respondents consider the senses as a relevant factor to choose a health club, as well as, which are the most and least important senses, smell and touch respectively.

For each group there are specific aspects/stimuli that managers can take advantage to prevent cancellations or help increasing the acquisition and retention of members.

For that positive and negative stimuli were identified. The positive ones create a pleasant environment, in which members feel motivated to work out in. Overall, there was a *consensus* among the three groups about the most important stimuli: music, not smelling from sweat and distribution of machines (room layout).

On the opposite side, the three groups were also unanimous in two stimuli that could have a negative impact in the experience. Both, noise pollution (conversation between



people) and smell from sweat were identified as potential factors could lead to cancellation.

Based on 67.7% of the respondents who are enrolled, senses can be relevant enough to cancel the membership (Table 8). By paying more attention to senses and the stimuli associated, health clubs can develop strategies and turn them into a competitive advantage. Those strategies can increase the retention rate, as well as, attract more consumers from the market.

To conclude, even though stimuli may not be the main reason to sign or cancel a membership, the stimuli can play an important role. If the stimuli are neglected a bad reputation would be associated with that health club. On the other hand, if developed to promote a pleasant experience, the positive stimuli can help to manipulate consumers' decision to enrol.

	Respondents Profile		
Health club situation	Has never been enrolled	Has been but is not anymore	Is enrolled
Consider the senses relevant when choosing the health club?	Yes		
Importance given to each sense			
Touch	Not important	Not important	Not important
Audition	Very important	Important	Important
Vision	Important	Slightly important	Not important
Smell	Very important	Very important	Very important
Cancellation motive		Other activities	
Positive stimuli in the experience (combination)	Music, Does not smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape.	Does not smell from sweat, Music, Landscape and Distribution of the machines (room layout).	Music, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat and Design
Negative stimuli in the experience (combination)	Music, Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Distribution of the machines (room layout).	Smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Noise pollution (conversation between people) and Music	Smell from sweat, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people) and Smell from cleaning products (bleach)
Are the senses a cancellation factor?			Yes

Figure 10 - Respondents profile.

## **5 | Conclusions, Limitations, Implications and Future research**

The use of senses to influence consumers decision has been more and more applied by companies to make their service memorable. Several authors studied different industries (Ribeiro, 2016; Mesquita, 2016; Vaz, 2017; Agapito, Almeida, Mendes & Valle, 2014 e.g.) and confirm that the implementation of strategies based on senses are advantageous in the market. Those strategies are seen as tools to improve the relationship with the customers, as well as add value and stimulate emotions that can be associated with specific brands (Braga & Oliveira, 2013).

For the purpose of this study it was intended to analyse if the senses and stimuli could play an important role in acquisition, retention or cancellation of memberships in health clubs. Throughout the literature review several topics were combined and used as a background for the research. However, the information that came from other studies had to be adapted to the fitness industry.

Considering health clubs services, the focus was on four senses: smell, vision, audition and touch. The stimuli associated to each sense could either create a pleasant environment or on the opposite negatively influence customers perception of the service.

In order to make a more accurate assessment of how the senses can be implemented in health clubs a list of stimuli was suggested. These included design, colours, distribution of the machines (room layout), landscape, texture of materials (machine handles), smell from sweat, smell from cleaning products (bleach), environment scent (air freshener sprays), noise pollution (conversation between people) and music.

To perform a more incisive analysis three groups were established, one included everyone that are enrolled in a health club, another for people who have been enrolled but are not anymore and other for those who have never been enrolled. With this it was possible to get three different perspectives, each of them reflects consumers vision based on their experience and opinion.

In this chapter, three points will be highlighted, a summary of the main conclusions from the quantitative research, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future researches.

## 5.1 | Conclusions

Several deductions were possible to take from the quantitative research. Regarding the points raised in the methodology chapter.

Overall, despite the health club situation, the results indicate all groups consider the senses to be important when choosing the health club, which confirms what authors as Hultén (2011), say when trying to establish or build a relationship with members or potential members the senses can be relevant in the experience.

Moreover, when asked to choose which senses could have more importance in the daily work-out in a health club. Once again, the three groups were in concordance, as touch was considered the least important sense and smell the most important one. This can be explained by the difficulty it is to stimulate the touch sense as there are not many opportunities to amaze the consumer and interfere in their choice (Goel & Pawaskar, 2014). In contrast the importance given to smell can be attributed to the capacity a fragrance has to bring memories and associate with past experiences (Braga & Oliveira, 2013).

As previously mentioned, a list of stimuli was developed, and it was asked to the respondents from the questionnaire to identify which four could have a positive or negative impact in consumers experience. The three groups of respondents had different opinions, the respondents who have never been enrolled considered the stimuli music, not smelling from sweat, distribution of the machines (room layout) and landscape as positive influencers. On the opposite music, smelling from sweat, distribution of the machines (room layout) and noise pollution (conversation between people) were identified as negative influencers.

For the group of respondents who have been enrolled but are not anymore, although none of the stimuli were considered the reason to cancel, the stimuli that could encourage cancellation were noise pollution (conversation between people), smelling from sweat, music and distribution of the machines (room layout). Concerning the reason to cancel, these respondents indicate the interest in other activities, lack of time and lack of motivation to be the main causes to cancel. In reverse, music, not smelling from sweat, distribution of the machines (room layout) and landscape are factors that could encourage these respondents to re-enrol.

Regarding those respondents who are enrolled, music, not smelling from sweat, distribution of the machines (room layout) and design are identified as positive indicators in the experience. On the other hand, smelling from sweat, noise pollution (conversation between people), smell from cleaning products (bleach) and music are pointed as potential cancellation factors.

Beside these results, it was also important to understand if the gender or age had any relationship with the importance given to senses. According to the results obtained from the test performed, it is independent the gender of the respondent and the importance they give to senses. However, there is a relationship between respondents age and importance they address to senses.

Also, one of the main points of the study was to see if senses could be a reason to cancel membership. The intention was to get the perspective of respondents who are enrolled, from their point of view and according to the results from the test, whether or not those respondents consider the senses to be important, they are not relevant enough to cancel the membership. A strategy involving senses intend to differentiate, distinguish and generate value to the service (Hülten, 2011). Although, senses can be seen as an influencing factor, they are not the decisive one.

Nevertheless, it was also analysed within respondents who are enrolled, if the number of days they go per week to the health club was directly related to the intention to cancel due to senses. Once again, the results from the test confirm there is no relationship between the two variables.

To conclude, in general most of the respondents have the same opinion, the senses are important regardless their health club situation. Even though senses and stimuli are not a motive to cancel, they can trigger a negative feeling in the brain of the human being. Essentially, the aim of using a sensorial marketing strategy is to positively influence customers behaviours and decisions, when applied by health clubs managers, it turns into a competitive advantage in relation to competitors.

## **5.2 | Limitations of research**

The main constrain was at the theoretical level. Although there are several studies about sensorial marketing and how can be transformed in a strategy used by companies from different industries. It was never applied before to the fitness market.

Based on this, the study was developed to help fulfil a gap in the literature. By including various topics from the sports industry and combine them with the senses and marketing literature.

Also, the sample was limited to the reach of the researcher. As two methods were applied, through social media and in the street. This implied a restriction related to the number of people the researcher knows and Lisbon area.

## **5.3 | Marketing implications**

The findings from the study confirm the importance senses and stimuli have in a closed space as a health club. In an industry full of options, a simple and inexpensive strategy based on positive stimuli, can be the differentiating and decisive factor in the decision making.

Being able to differentiate from the competition, is the ultimate goal a health club intends to achieve. For that it is important to consider what are the positive and negative stimuli, a sensorial marketing strategy in a health club may encounter.

Therefore, by creating a memorable experience, through sensorial marketing techniques it will be easier to remind and associate similar situations to the health club. As well as increase the word-of-mouth among members and potential members, and that is the best kind of advertising a health club could get.

## **5.4 | Suggestions for future researches**

Considering all the research, there are some aspects worth deeper attention, as:

- Beside the stimuli already present in this study, which could also be involved in a sensorial marketing strategy for health club;
- Look into each part of the health club facilities and analyse separately how the stimuli and senses can impact the experience;

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- Compare the type of health club (low cost, premium, e.g.) and the perception members have about the senses and stimuli present.

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## 7 | Appendix

### Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

Note: This is just a draft. The real version was distributed in Portuguese online.

#### Sensorial Marketing in health clubs

The present questionnaire aims to explore the importance of the senses, and associated stimuli, in the decision making, specifically for health clubs. For this purpose, only four senses will be considered, touch, vision, audition and smell, and a set of stimuli is pre-defined.

Each respondent will answer to a specific group of questions based on the health club situation at the moment.

I sincerely appreciate the minutes spared to answer this questionnaire.

#### Section 1 – Personal Information

**1. Gender:**

- Female ( )
- Male ( )

**2. Age:**

- Less than 21 ( )
- 21 – 30 ( )
- 31 – 40 ( )
- 41 – 50 ( )
- 51 – 60 ( )
- More than 60 ( )

**3. Current health club situation?**

- Is enrolled in a health club ( ) [Will answer section 4]
- Has been enrolled in a health club, but is not anymore ( ) [Will answer section 3]
- Has never been enrolled in a health club ( ) [Will answer section 2]

**Section 2 – Imagine you would enrol in a health club**

What would be your opinion, about the following points, if you were looking for a health club

1. Do you consider the senses relevant when choosing a health club?

- Yes ( )
- No ( )

2. Please rate the following senses, according to the level of importance you attribute to each one of them when choosing a health club.

	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Not important
Touch				
Vision				
Smell				
Audition				

3. Identify which 4 stimuli would positively influence your decision to enrol.

List of stimuli	
Music	
Does not smell from sweat	
Noise pollution (conversation between people)	
Distribution of the machines (room layout)	
Colours	
Design	
Texture of materials (machine handles)	
Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	
Landscape	
Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	

4. Identify which 4 stimuli would influence your decision to not subscribe membership.

List of stimuli	
Music	
Smell from sweat	
Noise pollution (conversation between people)	
Distribution of the machines (room layout)	
Colours	
Design	
Texture of materials (machine handles)	
Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	
Landscape	
Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	

**Section 3 – According to your previous health club experience**

**Based on your past experience how did you perceive the senses in the health club.**

**1. Do you consider the senses relevant when choosing a health club?**

- Yes ( )
- No ( )

**2. Please rate the following senses, according to the level of importance you attribute to each one of them when choosing a health club.**

	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Not important
Touch				
Vision				
Smell				
Audition				

**3. Indicate which of the following, was the motive to cancel your membership.**

Cancelation Motive	
Financial	
Lack of time	
Other activities	
Location	
Dissatisfaction with the service	
Lack of motivation	
Sensory stimuli	
Other	

**4. When you decided to cancel, did any of the following stimuli play an important role in the decision? (You can choose up to 4 or None)**

List of stimuli	
Music	
Smell from sweat	
Noise pollution (conversation between people)	
Distribution of the machines (room layout)	
Colours	
Design	
Texture of materials (machine handles)	
Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	
Landscape	
Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	
None	



5. If you were thinking about re-enrol which 4 stimuli would be relevant in your decision?

List of stimuli	
Music	
Does not smell from sweat	
Noise pollution (conversation between people)	
Distribution of the machines (room layout)	
Colours	
Design	
Texture of materials (machine handles)	
Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	
Landscape	
Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	

**Section 4 – According to the experience in your current health club**

The following questions intend to know how you perceive the senses and stimuli in your health club.

1. How often do you go to the health club?

- Up to 3 \* per week ( )
- 4 – 6 \* per week ( )
- Everyday ( )

2. Do you consider the senses relevant when choosing a health club?

- Yes ( )
- No ( )

3. Please rate the following senses, according to the level of importance you attribute to each one of them when choosing a health club.

	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Not important
Touch				
Vision				
Smell				
Audition				

**4. In your health club, which 4 stimuli have a positive influence.**

List of stimuli	
Music	
Does not smell from sweat	
Noise pollution (conversation between people)	
Distribution of the machines (room layout)	
Colours	
Design	
Texture of materials (machine handles)	
Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	
Landscape	
Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	

**5. In your health club, which 4 stimuli have a negative influence.**

List of stimuli	
Music	
Smell from sweat	
Noise pollution (conversation between people)	
Distribution of the machines (room layout)	
Colours	
Design	
Texture of materials (machine handles)	
Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	
Landscape	
Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	

**6. Do you consider the senses can be relevant enough, leading to cancellation of your membership?**

Yes ( )

No ( )

**Appendix 2 - Sample Characterization**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	146	47.4
Male	162	52.6
Total	308	100.0

Table 14 – Gender distribution.

Age	Frequency	Percent
Less than 21	28	9.1
21-30	85	27.6
31-40	52	16.9
41-50	54	17.5
51-60	49	15.9
More than 60	40	13.0
Total	308	100.0

Table 15 - Age distribution.

Current health club situation	Frequency	Percent
Is enrolled	110	35.7
Was enrolled but is not anymore	118	38.3
Has never been enrolled	80	26.0
Total	308	100.0

Table 16 - Current health club situation distribution.

**Appendix 3 - Distribution by each group regarding the importance attributed to each sense**

	Has never been enrolled											
	Touch			Vision			Smell			Audition		
	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent
Very Important	6	7.5	1.9	18	22.5	5.8	33	41.3	10.7	23	28.8	7.5
Important	11	13.8	3.6	28	35.0	9.1	20	25.0	6.5	21	26.3	6.8
Slightly important	28	35.0	9.1	16	20.0	5.2	14	17.5	4.5	22	27.5	7.1
Not important	35	43.7	11.4	18	22.5	5.8	13	16.3	4.2	14	17.5	4.5
Total	80	100.0	26.0	80	100.0	26.0	80	100.0	26.0	80	100.0	26.0

Table 17 - Importance attributed to each sense by the group of respondents that Has never been enrolled.

Was enrolled but is not anymore												
	Touch			Vision			Smell			Audition		
	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent
Very Important	11	9.3	3.6	17	14.4	5.5	55	46.6	17.9	35	29.7	11.4
Important	10	8.5	3.2	24	20.4	7.8	42	35.6	13.6	42	35.6	13.6
Slightly important	35	29.7	11.3	47	39.8	15.3	12	10.2	3.9	24	20.3	7.8
Not important	62	52.5	20.2	30	25.4	9.7	9	7.6	2.9	17	14.4	5.5
Total	118	100.0	38.3	118	100.0	38.3	118	100.0	38.3	118	100.0	38.3

**Table 18** - Importance attributed to each sense by the group of respondents that Was enrolled but is not anymore.

Is enrolled												
	Touch			Vision			Smell			Audition		
	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent	Frequency	Group Percent	Total Percent
Very Important	14	12.7	4.5	14	12.7	4.5	57	51.8	18.5	25	22.7	8.1
Important	5	4.5	1.6	33	30.0	10.7	29	26.4	9.4	43	39.1	14.0
Slightly important	33	30.0	10.7	29	26.4	9.4	17	15.5	5.5	31	28.2	10.1
Not important	58	52.7	18.8	34	30.9	11.0	7	6.4	2.3	11	10.0	3.6
Total	110	100.0	35.7	110	100.0	35.7	110	100.0	35.7	110	100.0	35.7

**Table 19** - Importance attributed to each sense by the group of respondents that Is enrolled.

**Appendix 4 - Positive and Negative combinations by groups**

Has never been enrolled	
Stimuli that encouraged to enrol (positive)	
List of stimuli combination	Count
Smell from cleanings (bleach), Landscape, Design, Does not smell like sweat	4
Colours, Does not smell like sweat, Distribution of machines (room layout), Music	1
Colours, Landscape, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	5
Colours, Music, Design, Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	4
Distribution of machines (room layout), Colours, Does not smell like sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	4
Distribution of machines (room layout), Colours, Does not smell like sweat, Landscape	5
Distribution of machines (room layout), Colours, Volume of music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Distribution of machines (room layout), Design, Music, Does not smell like sweat	2
Distribution of machines (room layout), Design, Texture of materials (machine handles), Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	1

Distribution of machines (room layout), Landscape, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Does not smell like sweat	5
Music, Colours, Landscape, Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	1
Music, Design, Does not smell like sweat, Landscape	5
Music, Distribution of machines (room layout), Colours, Landscape	2
Music, Distribution of machines (room layout), Design, Landscape	1
Music, Distribution of machines (room layout), Does not smell like sweat, Texture of materials (machines handles)	4
Music, Does not smell like sweat, Design, Landscape	3
Music, Does not smell like sweat, Distribution of machines (room layout), Colours	1
Music, Does not smell like sweat, Distribution of machines (room layout), Landscape	1
Music, Does not smell like sweat, Landscape, Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	1
Music, Does not smell like sweat, Noise Pollution (conversation between people), Landscape	1
Music, Landscape, Distribution of machines (room layout), Do not smell of sweat	8
Music, Texture of materials (machines handles), Distribution of machines (room layout), Do not smell of sweat	3
Does not smell like sweat, Colours, Design, Landscape	1
Does not smell like sweat, Distribution of machines (room layout), Colours, Design	1
Does not smell like sweat, Distribution of machines (room layout), Colours, Landscape	2
Does not smell like sweat, Noise Pollution (conversation between people), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape	2
Does not smell like sweat, Noise Pollution (conversation between people), Music, Landscape	2
Landscape, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music, Colours	3
Texture of materials (machines handles), Design, Distribution of machines (room layout), Does not smell like sweat	2
Texture of materials (machines handles), Music, Does not smell like sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	4

**Table 20** - Has never been enrolled positive combinations.

<b>Has never been enrolled</b>	
<b>Stimuli that encouraged to cancel (negative)</b>	
List of stimuli combination	Count
Smell from sweat, Colours, Music, Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	1
Smell from sweat, Design, Landscape, Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	2

Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	1
Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape	1
Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Colours, Landscape	4
Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Distribution of machines (room layout), Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	4
Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Distribution of machines (room layout), Colours	1
Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Distribution of machines (room layout), Music	1
Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of machines (handles), Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	2
Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Music, Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	3
Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Smell from sweat, Music, Texture of materials (machine handles), Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	1
Distribution of machines (room layout), Design, Texture of materials (machine handles), Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	1
Music, Smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	1
Music, Smell from sweat, Distribution of machines (room layout), Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	1
Music, Smell from sweat, Distribution of machines (room layout), Colours	5
Music, Smell from sweat, Distribution of machines (room layout), Design	1
Music, Smell from sweat, Distribution of machines (room layout), Noise Pollution (conversation between people)	4
Music, Smell from sweat, Landscape, Noise Pollution (conversation between people)	3
Music, Smell from sweat, Noise Pollution (conversation between people), Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	2
Music, Smell from sweat, Texture of materials (machine handles), Noise Pollution (conversation between people)	6
Music, Noise Pollution (conversation between people), Distribution of machines (room layout), Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	4
Music, Texture of materials (machine handles), Distribution of machines (room layout), Design	5
Noise Pollution (conversation between people), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	2
Noise Pollution (conversation between people), Distribution of machines (room layout), Smell from sweat, Design	5

Noise Pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles), Smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	4
Noise Pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles), Distribution of machines (room layout), Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	5
Noise Pollution (conversation between people), Music, Distribution of machines (room layout), Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	2
Texture of materials (machine handles), Design, Smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	3

**Table 21** - Has never been enrolled negative combinations.

<b>Was enrolled but is not anymore</b>	
<b>Stimuli that encouraged to re-enrol (positive)</b>	
List of stimuli combination	Count
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	4
Colours, Design, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Colours, Landscape, Music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Colours, Landscape, Music	3
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Design, Music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	2
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Design, Music	1
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Colours, Landscape, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Music	2
Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1

Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape, Music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Noise pollution (conversation between people), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Texture of materials (machine handles)	3
Does not smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Colours, Music	1
Does not smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape	3
Does not smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music	1
Does not smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Does not smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Landscape, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Does not smell from sweat, Colours, Design, Music	1
Does not smell from sweat, Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Design	2
Does not smell from sweat, Design, Music, Distribution of the machines (room layout)	6
Does not smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Design, Music	3
Does not smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Design, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Does not smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Design, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Does not smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Does not smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Music	1
Does not smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Texture of materials (machine handles), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	6
Does not smell from sweat, Music, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Colours	3
Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Landscape	2
Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Colours, Design	1
Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout)	1
Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Design	1
Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music	1



Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape	1
Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	3
Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	12
Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape, Music	1
Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape (sight of windows), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	2
Does not smell from sweat, Does not Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Texture of materials (machine handles), Distribution of the machines (room layout)	3
Does not smell from sweat, Landscape, Design, Texture of materials (machine handles)	10
Does not smell from sweat, Landscape, Music, Distribution of the machines (room layout)	8
Does not smell from sweat, Texture of materials (machine handles), Landscape, Colours	5
Landscape, Design, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1

**Table 22** - Was enrolled but is not anymore positive combinations.

<b>Was enrolled but is not anymore</b>	
<b>Stimuli that encouraged to cancel (negative)</b>	
List of stimuli combination	Count
Smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Sound pollution (conversation between people)	2
Smell from sweat, Colours, Design	3
Smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout)	1
Smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music	6
Smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	3
Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Smell from cleaning products (bleach)	4
Smell from sweat, Texture of materials (machine handles), Distribution of the machines (room layout)	3
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music	5
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	5
Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout)	1

Music (Volume or style), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
None	73
Landscape	1
Landscape, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	5
Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Texture of materials (machine handles), Design, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Texture of materials (machine handles), Landscape, Music (Volume or style), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1

**Table 23** - Was enrolled but is not anymore negative combinations.

<b>Is enrolled</b>	
<b>Stimuli that have a positive influence</b>	
List of stimuli combination	Count
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat	2
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape	1
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Colours, Landscape, Music	7
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Colours, Landscape, Texture of materials (machine handles)	2
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat, Music	8
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Does not smell from sweat, Landscape, Music	1
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Landscape, Does not smell from sweat, Music	1
Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Landscape, Does not smell from sweat, Texture of materials (machine handles)	4
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music	1
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat, Music	1
Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Texture of materials (machine handles), Design	2
Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat, Music	3

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Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Music	1
Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Does not smell from sweat	1
Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Colours, Landscape, Does not smell from sweat, Music	1
Design, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat	1
Design, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), No sweat smell, Music	1
Design, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), No sweat smell, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Design, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music	1
Design, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat	2
Design, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music, Texture of machines (Handles)	1
Design, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Does not smell from sweat, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Design, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape, Music	1
Design, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape, Does not smell from sweat	1
Design, Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music	3
Design, Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat	3
Design, Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape	1
Design, Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Design, Colours, Does not smell from sweat, Music	4
Design, Colours, Does not smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Design, Colours, Landscape, Music	2
Design, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat, Music	3
Design, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Music	7
Design, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Does not smell from sweat	1
Design, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Texture of materials (machine handles)	2
Design, Landscape, Does not smell from sweat, Music (Volume or Style)	2
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Design, Music, Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	3

Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Does not smell from sweat, Music	2
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Does not smell from sweat, Texture of materials (machine handles)	2
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Texture of materials (machine handles), Music	8
Music, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Does not smell from sweat, Design	10
Does not smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music, Environment scent (air freshener sprays)	2
Landscape, Colours, Does not smell from sweat, Music	3

**Table 24** - Is enrolled positive combinations.

<b>Is enrolled</b>	
<b>Stimuli that have a negative influence</b>	
List of stimuli combination	Count
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Does smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Distribution of the machines (room layout)	5
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Colours, Design, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Colours, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	2
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music, Texture of materials (machine handles), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	3
Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape, Design, Music	1
Does smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout)	2
Does smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music	2
Does smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	6
Does smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Texture of materials (machine handles)	3
Does smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Does smell from sweat, Environment scent (air freshener sprays), Music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1

Does smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Colours, Distribution of the machines (room layout)	1
Does smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Design, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Does smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Design	1
Does smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music	1
Does smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout), Noise pollution (conversation between people)	2
Does smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	8
Does smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape, Design	1
Does smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Landscape, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Does smell from sweat, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Does smell from sweat, Colours, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Does smell from sweat, Design, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music	2
Does smell from sweat, Design, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Does smell from sweat, Design, Landscape, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	8
Does smell from sweat, Design, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Does smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Design, Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Does smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	2
Does smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Does smell from sweat, Distribution of the machines (room layout), Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	2
Does smell from sweat, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	2
Does smell from sweat, Landscape, Design, Colours	10
Does smell from sweat, Landscape, Design, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	1
Does smell from sweat, Landscape, Music, Texture of materials (machine handles)	2
Does smell from sweat, Landscape, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	2

Does smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Distribution of the machines (room layout)	1
Does smell from sweat, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music	4
Colours, Distribution of machines in the room, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	2
Colours, Landscape, Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Music	2
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Design, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	2
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people)	2
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Landscape, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	1
Distribution of the machines (room layout), Noise pollution (conversation between people), Smell from cleaning products (bleach), Texture of materials (machine handles)	3
Landscape, Design, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	2
Landscape, Music, Noise pollution (conversation between people), Texture of materials (machine handles)	3
Landscape, Texture of materials (machine handles), Music, Distribution of the machines (room layout)	6

**Table 25** - Is enrolled negative combinations.

## Appendix 5 – List of cancelation motives

Cancellation motive	Frequency	Percent
Financial	5	4.2
Lack of time	26	22.0
Other activities	35	29.7
Location	3	2.5
Dissatisfaction with the service	17	14.4
Lack of motivation	20	16.9
Sensory stimuli	0	0.0
Other	12	10.2
Total	118	100.0

**Table 26** - Distribution of responses according to the cancellation motive by those who have been enrolled but are not anymore. Results are presented in frequency and percentage.