

To go or not to go? Factors affecting fitness club attendance

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The health and fitness industry has seen rapid growth over the last 15 years to a current market value of £2.5bn. In 2004, 4.2 million adults were members of private clubs in the UK; 9.1% of the adult population (Mintel, 2005). Such growth can be attributed to increased governmental campaigning to increasing well-being and reduce health problems associated with sedentary lifestyles (Robinson, 2004). Also, the popularity of collaborations between private medical insurance companies and certain multi-club operators highlight the perceived link between fitness club attendance and a healthy lifestyle. However, whilst there has been a growth in membership, we know that many members are 'paying not to go to the gym' (Della Vigna, 2002). This phenomenon attracts interest from occupational, consumer and health psychologists whereby factors such as satisfaction, fit, identity, involvement, attitudinal and normative beliefs are considered to play a part in fitness club attendance.

As part of a QUAL(quan) mixed-method design, semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with a stratified random sample of fitness club members which were transcribed and thematically analysed.