

Researchers investigate how music can be motivational during exercise

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Research in the *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing* sheds light on the effect of music on people using fitness facilities, providing useful insights for the health and fitness industry.

The study shows how different types of music, whether self-selected by those working out or chosen by the fitness facility, affect the emotional and cognitive responses of customers in such environments.

Antonio S. Williams and Zack P. Pedersen of Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, U.S., and Byungik Park of Dongguk University, Seoul, South Korea explain that [external stimuli](#), such as music, can influence a person's emotional and [cognitive states](#), and so they sought to understand whether music could be motivational in the context of exercise.

The researchers recruited 183 self-paced gym users and put them into two groups—one in which they could choose the music they listened to during their workout and a second where the facility selected the music. Tests were carried out in a normal [fitness](#) facility rather than a laboratory. The team then used structural equation modeling to analyze the data and evaluate their hypothesis.

Three findings emerged. First, the participants who chose their own music were much more motivated in their fitness activities compared to those in the facility-selected music group. The team suggests that choice in this matter gave the gym users more autonomy which resonated well with their workout.

Second, the perception of whether the music was motivational or not directly affected the gym users' emotional state. If they were enjoying the music while working out, they felt more motivated, and thus had a heightened emotional response during exercise.

Finally, the level of musical enjoyment chimed with how satisfied the gym users felt with their workout session once completed. In other words, the emotional and cognitive impact of the music directly influenced the overall satisfaction of the customers with their exercise

experience.

The implications of this research are substantial for fitness facility managers and owners. Understanding the motivational power of [music](#) and its impact on the emotions of their customers could help to optimize the fitness facility environment and enhance the overall experience. Greater satisfaction and enjoyment can then lead to repeat business, of course.

More information: Antonio S. Williams et al, The influence of music on self-paced fitness consumers' perceived motivational qualities and optimal level of emotional state and satisfaction with exercise experience, *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing* (2023). [DOI: 10.1504/IJSMM.2023.131950](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSMM.2023.131950)

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