

## Fitness clubs activities in Kharkiv

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**Purpose:** to analyze the fitness clubs activities in Kharkiv.

**Material & Methods:** analysis of literary sources; analysis of documents; survey (questionnaire) methods of mathematical statistics. The study was conducted on the basis of 12 fitness clubs in Kharkiv among their clients.

**Results:** the study identified the main differences and competitive advantages of fitness clubs in Kharkiv; the preferences of club customers for choosing a fitness club, popular fitness programs, additional services, as well as effective sources of information about the club and the main reasons for leaving the fitness club.

**Conclusions:** found that the market of fitness services in Kharkov is characterized by 297 fitness establishments and the main leaders in the local market are network fitness clubs. The ways of increasing the effectiveness of fitness clubs in Kharkiv are determined.

**Keywords:** fitness, services, clients, analysis, market.

### Introduction

Modern requirements of society to the level of development of the physical qualities of man, his need for motor activity and the pursuit of health and well-being, have caused the wide spread of fitness all over the world. In Ukraine, fitness has developed over the past 15–20 years. Today in all cities of our country, including in the city of Kharkiv, there is a variety of special health-improving fitness centers and clubs, beauty and health studios that provide a range of services, including popular fitness programs and technologies. They are based on the latest scientific developments and modern technologies in the field of physical culture and sports, aimed at satisfying the various physical culture and sport interests of each client of the club.

Analysis of modern literature suggests that scientific research on fitness in recent years has been given a lot of significance. The study of the history, ideology and methodological principles of fitness is presented in the works of Yu. V. Menchin and A. V. Menchin [10], T. A. Kudri [9], Yu. I. Belyak [1] and other scientists. The role of fitness in the system of health-improving physical culture was considered by A. K. Kornosenko [8]. Trends in the development of group fitness programs are defined by A. Blagoi, N. Lysakov [2].

At the same time, an analysis of recent research and publications shows that the activity of fitness clubs is of scientific interest. In particular, the authors of [4, 7, 14; 15] considered the state, background and prospects for the development of the fitness industry in the world and in Ukraine. The segmentation of the market of sports and health services for the purpose of identifying potential consumers of these services is carried out in the work of Yu. Dutchak [6]. Problems of management of organizational and managerial and marketing activities of fitness-oriented organizations were considered in the works of V. Vavilov [3], S. Demekhy, V. Gayevoy [5]; N. V. Sereda, K. A. Moshkina [11].

However, up to the present time, due attention has not been given to the study of the problems of functioning and development trends in the activity of fitness clubs in Kharkov, with the

exception of certain works by N. Sereda and S. Stadnik [12; 13]. The relevance of this work is determined by the need to explore possible ways to improve the effectiveness of fitness clubs in the city of Kharkiv, taking into account the preferences, interests and wishes of the clients themselves.

**Relationship of research with scientific programs, plans, themes.** The research was carried out within the framework of the initiative topic of the Department of Management of KSAPC for 2016–2018. "Methodological bases of strategic development of the sphere of physical culture and sports in the region" (state registration number 0113U004615).

**Purpose of the study:** to analyze the fitness clubs activities in Kharkiv.

**Objectives of the study:** 1) to characterize the market of fitness services in Kharkiv; 2) identify ways to improve the effectiveness of fitness clubs.

### Material and Methods of the research

The study used the following research methods: analysis of literature sources; analysis of documents; survey (questionnaire) methods of mathematical statistics. Analysis of the literature sources was used to interpret the obtained data when comparing different points of view on the problem under study. In the course of the study, 102 literary sources were analyzed. The analysis was also carried out administrative and administrative documents fitness clubs in the city of Kharkov, which allowed determining the features of the activities and competitive advantages of each fitness club. A survey of clients of 12 fitness clubs in Kharkov was carried out according to the author's questionnaire with the help of questions that characterized the respondents as to age and sex; experience of fitness; preferences for choosing a fitness club and fitness areas, additional services; sources of information about the club and the reasons for leaving the fitness club. The total number of respondents – 120 people, which ensured a sufficient proximity of the sample of respondents to the general population. The study used Excel.

## Results of the research and their discussion

Today in the market of Kharkiv, according to the results of our calculation, there are about 297 fitness facilities. For the analysis of the market of fitness services offered by representatives of the fitness market of the city of Kharkiv, we used the following criteria for the activity of fitness facilities: location; marketing events; equipment and inventory, their suppliers; service personnel: basic and additional; commercial terms – the form of payment for services to clients; image of the club; unique offers.

Firstly, based on the criteria outlined, from the point of view of the strategic management and marketing policy, the city's fitness clubs can be divided into network fitness clubs and individual fitness clubs.

It was found out that the network of fitness clubs in the city of Kharkov is the majority, the main number of them is concentrated in the sleeping areas of the city with developed infrastructure. In this category, we considered fitness clubs: "Malibu", "Pheromone", "Safari", "PULSE GYM".

The network of fitness clubs "Malibu" in the market of fitness services has been operating since 2003. It includes 28 establishments in 6 cities of Ukraine, including 14 clubs "Malibu" in Kharkiv. The network of sports clubs "PULSE GYM" in the city of Kharkiv is represented by 9 institutions. The history of the network of fitness clubs "Safari" began in 2009 with a five-story complex in the center of Kharkiv, and now in the city it is represented by 9 institutions. The "Pheromon" network in Kharkiv is represented by 5 fitness clubs.

A feature of the network fitness clubs is that the network acts as a single organization, that is, has a system strategy, economic guidelines, and, unlike a single fitness club, has the maximum coverage of the market. Due to its wide network, the possible financial losses of some fitness clubs are offset by the success of other.

Secondly, from the point of view of the quality of equipment and inventory, the uniqueness of trade offers for basic, additional services and the image of the club in the city of Kharkov can separately be distinguished such fitness clubs as "Tetra", "Aura", "EGOISTE". This is a fitness establishment with a wide range of basic and additional services, targeted at paying customers who appreciate stylish design, exclusive technologies and an individual approach to each client.

Fitness club "Tetra" is one of the largest fitness clubs in Eastern Ukraine. On its territory there are four indoor hard courts and 6 outdoor tennis courts, a squash center, a gym, three swimming pools of various sizes, a children's fitness club. Fitness clubs "Aura" (2 places in the city) – this is an option for those who want to go to the gym and pool. The difference between clubs is that the services are offered in the complex: swimming pool and sauna, as well as a gym and group lessons. "EGOISTE" is a modern fitness club in the very center of the city with a charming panorama of the historical center of Kharkiv. "EGOISTE" is distinguished by a qualitative and individual approach to each client.

The competitive advantages of the above-mentioned clubs include: spacious gyms; comfortable climatic conditions; modern professional power and cardio equipment from lead-

ing world manufacturers; a wide range of fitness programs, including for children; wide range of additional services; presence of club system; qualified staff.

Third, in terms of the form of payment for services by clients, the city's fitness clubs can be divided into fitness clubs with a club system and clubs with a subscription system.

Among the fitness clubs with a clearly distinguished club system, we considered the clubs "Tetra", "Aura", "EGOISTE". Features of visiting these fitness clubs: on the club system – unlimited number of times, only cards are presented for six months or for a year. The cost of such cards from 11000 UAH to 33400 UAH per year.

Among fitness clubs with a subscription system there are both network and individual fitness clubs. The form of payment in these clubs – a one-time visit or a subscription for a month, six months, a year. Fitness clubs "Pheromone", "PULSE GYM", "Olympus", "Territory Fitness", "Forma-T" offer different types of season tickets: morning, afternoon, evening, for 2 visits y week, 3 visits a week, subscription – esprit, weekend, school, student, etc. The average price for one lesson in the gym is 70–80 UAH, for eight classes – 300–350 UAH, 12 lessons – 400–450 UAH. The average price of one group session on fitness can reach 70–80 UAH, 8 classes – 350–400 UAH., 12 lessons – 450–500 UAH. The cost of a subscription for six months can range from 1700 to 2500 UAH, per year from 2600 to 9000 UAH. It should be noted the uniqueness of the fitness clubs of the Malibu network, as they present both club and subscription systems, as well as a school of trainers.

Fourthly, from the point of view of fitness programs offered to clients, among all fitness clubs it is necessary to separate clubs with a swimming pool. According to our own estimates, the share of fitness facilities with swimming pools in the city of Kharkov is 24% of the total number of clubs. In the course of the study, we considered fitness clubs "Tetra", "Aura", "Malibu", "Safari", "Pheromone", where there are swimming pools and in connection with this, additional fitness programs are provided: aquafitness, aqua-steppe, classes for future moms and toddlers and the like. Thanks to the presence of a swimming pool, such fitness clubs will always be determined by a high degree of attendance. After all, the pool is a unique trade offer and a competitive advantage in the market of fitness services.

In the course of the study, we identified the features of services, the main differences in self-positioning and the benefits of 12 fitness clubs in Kharkiv in competition. We summarized and presented the data obtained in Table 1.

In the course of solving the second task of our study, we interviewed clients of 12 fitness clubs in Kharkiv. 65% of women and 35% of men were involved as respondents. This ratio is justified by a greater motivation for women to practice in fitness clubs than men. By age, respondents were divided into groups based on the main phases of the life cycle of a person: persons aged 17 to 25 years – 20% of respondents; persons aged between 26 and 35 years – 65%; persons aged 36 to 45 years – 15%. The experience of fitness in 40% of clients is more than 3 years, from 1 to 3 years – 45% of respondents and less than a year are engaged in fitness 15% of respondents.

**Table 1**

**Comparative characteristics of fitness clubs in Kharkiv**

Characteristics	Fitness clubs		
	"Malibu", "Pharemont", "Safari", «PULSE GYM»	«Tetra», «Aura», «EGOISTE»	"Territory Fitness", "Forma-T", "Aphrodite", "Olympus", "Salamander"
Focus on the consumer (self-positioning in the market of fitness services)	mass consumer orientation	exclusive audience (solvent and fastidious consumer)	orientation towards the youth / "family group" of consumers
Size of organization	Medium / small / large	large	small
Price policy	affordable price, system of season tickets / club cards	high price, only club system	affordable price / subscription systems
Organizational structure of management	multilevel thanks to an extensive network of institutions, the existence of a system strategy	branched thanks to a large number of units and management units	simplified structure due to the lack of some units (marketing, service management, etc.)
Resource support	qualified staff high/average quality of equipment and inventory; high or medium level of comfort	highly qualified staff modern professional equipment; impeccable service; original design	qualified staff average quality of equipment and inventory; small size of halls, dressing rooms
Marketing events	minimum set of additional services; "Aggressive" marketing policy	unique trade offers on the provision of basic and additional services; stable marketing activities	minimum set of additional services; inadequate use of marketing tools

As it turned out, the majority of the interviewed clients of fitness clubs (85%) believe that the use of outdoor advertising (flyers, billboards, city lights) will inform the public about the services provided by the fitness club; 60% of respondents received information about the fitness club from relatives, friends and acquaintances; 45% – learned about this or that fitness institution from Internet resources.

In the course of the study, it was determined which characteristics influence the choice of the fitness club by the consumers of physical culture and health services, namely: the convenient location of the club (95%); highly qualified and professional trainers (75%); affordable price for services and flexible system of discounts (60%); modern fitness equipment and inventory (55%); diversity of group programs (50%); Individual approach to each client (45%); high level of service (40%); favorable atmosphere in the club (35%) and a spacious classroom (30%);

As we can see, the most convenient location of the club is the greatest influence on the choice of the fitness club by the consumers of physical culture and health services. At the same time, the management of fitness clubs should pay special attention to the organization of a continuous process of professional development of fitness trainers, instructors, consultants who work directly with clients to fully meet their fitness and health interests.

Pursuing the above goal, the city's fitness clubs provide a range of services, including popular fitness programs and fitness technologies. In our study, we found that the clients of the fitness clubs prefer pilates (65%), fitness mix (60%), stretching (50%), callanetics and MIX-intensive (45%), TRX and strip plastic (35% %), Zumba and a gym (30%), yoga (20%). We believe that it is very important to improve the effectiveness of fitness clubs is to ensure the diversity and constant updating of fitness programs, taking into account the world trends

in the development of health-improving fitness programs and technologies.

The attraction of as many customers as possible is also facilitated by the availability in the fitness club of additional services, namely: massage, sauna, SPA-procedures, beauty salon, fitness bar, etc. As the results of the survey show, (65%), SPA-procedures (40%), beauty salons (25%) and saunas (20%) are more likely to be offered to customers in the fitness club. So, in our opinion, the range of additional services that the fitness club offers can be attributed to its competitive advantages in the market of fitness services.

As it turned out, among the reasons for leaving the fitness club, respondents define: financial difficulties (45%), frequent business trips (40%), health problems (35%), transition to another fitness club (30%), change in work schedule (15%), laziness and lack of will power (5%), pregnancy (5%). So, a significant number of respondents (35%) noted the cause of the "health problem". Therefore, in order to improve the efficiency of fitness clubs, special attention should be given to trainers and instructors to diagnose and monitor the physical condition of those involved, as well as individual approach to each client. The received results also testify to the need to develop service management for working with clients, after all, almost a third of respondents (30%) noted among the reasons for leaving the club moving to another fitness club.

## Conclusions

1. It is established that the market of fitness services in the city of Kharkov is characterized by 297 fitness establishments (clubs, centers, complexes, studios, etc.). Competitive advantage in the market of fitness services is enjoyed by fitness institutions with a swimming pool, whose share is 24% of the total in the city. It has been established that the main leaders among Kharkiv fitness clubs are network fitness clubs.

2. Researches that were conducted among the clients of 12 fitness clubs of Kharkov show that the greatest influence on the choice of the fitness club by the consumers of physical culture and health services is provided by: the convenient location of the club (95%); highly qualified and professional trainers (75%); affordable price for services and a flexible system of discounts (60%). The majority of respondents prefer pilates (65%), fitness mix (60%), stretching (50%) and additional services: fitness bar (65%), SPA-procedures (40%).

It is determined that the organization of a continuous process

of professional development of fitness staff, providing diversity and continuous updating of fitness programs and additional services; application of marketing tools for advertising and promotion of fitness services in the market; further development of service management; application of modern methods of diagnosis, control and individual approach to each client – are ways to improve the effectiveness of fitness clubs in the city of Kharkiv.

**Prospects for further research** should be linked with the development of strategic directions for the development of the fitness industry in the city of Kharkiv.

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