



**Politécnico
de Viseu**

Escola Superior
de Tecnologia
e Gestão de Viseu

From Likes to Lifts: The Shifting Landscape of Women in Fitness and the Impact of Social Media on Gym Participation

Ana Vitor Gomes Almeida

Dissertação

Mestrado em Marketing

Trabalho efetuado sob a orientação de
Professora Doutora Paula Sofia Neta Vasconcelos Pinheiro

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Feminism isn't about making women stronger.
Women are already strong; it's about changing the
way the world perceives that strength.

G.D. Anderson

Agradecimentos

Em primeiro lugar, o maior agradecimento de todos vai para a minha irmã, para a minha mãe e para o meu padrasto. Milene, Rosário e Manuel. Sem a vossa ajuda teria sido impossível conseguir conciliar a vida académica com tudo o resto. Um obrigada do tamanho do mundo!

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Abstract

In a world where social networks dominate the online presence and where influencer marketing has become crucial for brand positioning, curiosity to understand whether the influence of social networks may motivate behaviours related to the practice of physical exercise arises. An evolution of both the body image associated with women and women's perception of strength-based sports have had an impact in women's participation in gyms and health clubs. Media representation, social networks and fitness influencers can be considered guilty of this shift in women's perception of their own bodies and can also be pointed as reason for a shift in the weight room scenario. A review of the existing literature made it possible to understand that there is a lack of studies which focus on the behavioural shift in people who consume fitness related content on social networks. Through this analysis, it was possible to observe that studies tend to focus on purchasing intentions and decisions and not on behavioural patterns resulting from the type of content. In order to find out whether this behavioural change exists, and whether social networks influence it, interviews were conducted with technical directors and managers of gyms in various councils in the Viseu district, and questionnaires were sent to female gym-goers. By analysing the data obtained, it was possible to conclude that the increase in female participation in gyms is the result of a combination of the influence of social networks and societal changes.

Key Words

women, fitness, gym, social networks, influencer marketing

Resumo

Num mundo onde as redes sociais dominam a presença online e onde o marketing de influência se tornou crucial para o posicionamento das marcas, surge a curiosidade de perceber se a influência das redes sociais pode motivar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico. A evolução, tanto da imagem corporal associada às mulheres, como da perceção das mulheres em relação aos desportos de força, teve um impacto na participação das mulheres em ginásios e *health clubs*. A representação nos media, as redes sociais e os *fitness influencers* podem ser considerados responsáveis por esta mudança na perceção das mulheres sobre os seus próprios corpos e podem também ser assinalados como razão para uma mudança no cenário das salas de musculação. Uma revisão da literatura existente permitiu compreender que há uma falta de estudos que se concentrem na mudança comportamental das pessoas que consomem conteúdo relacionado com o fitness nas redes sociais. Através desta análise, foi possível constatar que os estudos tendem a focar-se nas intenções e decisões de compra e não nos padrões de comportamento resultantes do tipo de conteúdo. De modo a perceber se essa mudança comportamental existe, e se as redes sociais influenciam a mesma, foram realizadas entrevistas a diretores técnicos e gerentes de ginásios de vários concelhos do distrito de Viseu, e questionários a frequentadoras desses mesmos ginásios. Através da análise dos dados obtidos foi possível concluir que, o aumento da participação feminina em contexto de ginásios é resultado de uma combinação da influência das redes sociais e de mudanças na sociedade.

Palavras-chave

mulher, fitness, ginásio, redes sociais, marketing de influência

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1. Introduction

Starting with an analysis of the fitness culture and its intersection with gender roles and societal standards propagated through social networks, the impact of social networks platforms on health and fitness perceptions will be discussed. While the existing literature focuses mainly on the negative effects of social networks, in this review, the positive effects will be pointed out.

A review of literature will be held, analysing the topics of fitness culture, benefits of weight training for women, motivations for women to exercise, exercise motivated by the internet, and the impact of Covid on the fitness industry. This review of literature will allow for a detailed vision of what has already been studied and analysed concerning this topic, as well as identifying the gaps in existing literature.

In order to attain the main goal of this study, research was conducted through Google Scholar from September 2023 to August 2024, selecting research whose themes concern the role of women in strength-based sports, the influence of social networks in society behaviours and decisions, and Covid 19 impact in both. The analysis of relevant papers, was therefore, made essentially through the ones published in the last two decades and through some as recent as 2023.

As there are several studies whose main goal is to understand purchase intentions and decisions, the main goal of this review is to understand the role of social networks as influencers of behaviours regarding the influence of social networks on the behaviour regarding the practice of physical exercise.

Because there is a historical exclusion of women from weight training and those who engage in strength-based sports face challenges still to this day, in-depth interviews and questionnaires will be held in order to attain information about the current scenario in gyms and health clubs regarding women's participation. These two methods of collecting information will also allow to conclude whether the shift in the scenario of gyms can be attributed to social networks.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Fitness culture and women in sport

Fitness culture concerns a lifestyle around physical activity, adequate nutrition, and general well-being (Yang, 2017). It promotes the importance of physical and mental health, through regular exercise and healthy eating habits (Silva, 2023). In a general sense, there seems to be a conscience that the practice of physical exercise brings several health benefits (Durau et al., 2022).

Physical activity has a strong connection with gender roles in society (Yang, 2017). The practice of physical activity, be it in amateur context in sports clubs or gyms, be it in professional sports leagues, has always shown gender disparities in terms of participation, resources, and recognition (Sabino & Loureiro, 2022). These differences include uneven money prizes, competition levels and media representation (Alay, 2008; Rasmussen et al., 2021).

The segregation in competitive sports on international level increases this division and makes women see themselves as weaker and less capable and less athletic than men (Yang, 2017). Since being little girls, they learn that being strong and muscular is typical for men, and that if they are strong, they will be less attractive in the eyes of the opposite sex (Daroszevska, 2018). Furthermore, women are more likely to experience gender violence in a sports context, where they are perceived as invasive by occupying men's space, or as inferior because they can't attain the same performance levels of male athletes (Phipps, 2022).

Professional sports are dominated by men and consequently the same happens to media coverage in sports (Alay, 2008). The little representation women have in sports media is often a sexualized portrait, where athletes' value is assigned to their body and not their sports capacity (Daroszevska, 2018). Thus, the media emphasize a sexualized image of bodily perfection (Holmes et al., 1994) where women appear as thin and toned, as per the traditional beauty ideal for a woman (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018).

Consequently, concerns with body image are more frequent amongst women than men (Davison & McCabe, 2005). Women are more concerned with the social aspect of their body image and at the same time are the ones who show less degree of satisfaction with their bodies when compared to the opposite sex (Davison & McCabe, 2005).

The beauty ideal for women is a conjugation of muscles and curves with a low body fat percentage, being extremely unrealistic and almost impossible to attain (Pilgrim &

Bohnet-Joschko, 2019; Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017). This social pressure and the thinness patterns for women may affect different generations (Lewis & Cachelin, 2001), being that dissatisfaction towards one's body happens to middle-aged and elderly women, and not just with young women (Yang, 2017). Older women may develop eating disorders due to a concern with aging and due to the belief, that weight loss and a thin body are synonyms of youth (Lewis & Cachelin, 2001).

During the 80's an ideal of a more muscular woman emerged, which made possible for a woman who trained with weights to be more accepted in society in general, and by other women in particular (Pedretti, 2008). Even though this happened, contestants in bodybuilding competitions, where muscular aesthetics and body symmetry are judged (Baghurst et al., 2014), are more exposed to exercise dependency and muscular dysmorphia than a woman that trains with weights in a recreational way, for example in a gym context (Griffin, 2021) due to the image of a muscular woman being against the traditional ideology of a fragile and passive woman (Daroszevska, 2018).

Historically, women have been excluded from training with weights to improve their physical strength, because this strength as well as visible muscles are traditionally considered to be masculine and outside the femininity norm (MacShane, 2014). Today, women who train with weights are often the target of rejections, confused stares, and disapproval, since physical strength and muscularity are not encouraged in the female gender (MacShane, 2014).

Women's participation in sports challenges gender stereotypes and promotes girls' and women's equality and empowerment (Daroszevska, 2018), and the search for the practice of physical exercise, be it through weights or gymnastics, may be connected to the frequent body dissatisfaction imposed by society (Anversa et al., 2019).

Women who participate in strength-based sports, where the main goal is to develop the muscles by lifting weights, go against the traditional gender ideas and that frequently incites gender-based violence in social networks as well as in real life (Phipps, 2022). Strength-based sports, such as weight training, may be empowering and may encourage confidence in women (Phipps, 2022) and women-only gyms may contribute to a greater participation of women in the world of weight training, so that women may enjoy all the advantages that come from this kind of sport (Richardson et al., 2023).

The barriers to women's participation in weightlifting are essentially related to gender stigmas and with the difficulty these have with managing family life, professional life and still have the time availability to an activity just for themselves (Richardson et al., 2023).

There is also a lack of knowledge in women concerning training with weights and strength training, as a consequence of an imposition of social and cultural values enforced on women's image (Rohloff, 2013). There are few studies which analyse women's motivations to participating in bodybuilding competitions (Suffolk, 2015) and few investigations with the intention of motivating women to participate in sport, let alone in bodybuilding (Ricker, 2006).

Bodybuilding and other sports allow women's access to spaces which are traditionally dominated by men (Daroszezewska, 2018). Through bodybuilding women abandon the traditional idea of the western culture and threaten the moral sensibility of those observing (Suffolk, 2015). Female bodybuilding competitions defy the norms associated with the female body, allow for participants to feel less vulnerable as women and more empowered by their physical strength (Scott, 2011). For this reason, more women are becoming interested in female bodybuilding training and competitions (Griffin, 2021).

There are few studies focused on the female perspective regarding strength-based sports (Richardson et al., 2023) even though several studies mention the benefits of the practice of physical exercise for women's health in different stages of life, such as before and during pregnancy or during menopause and post menopause (Silva, 2023). Strength-based sports such as lifting weights can provide an increased bone density and better cardiovascular health (Richardson et al., 2023). Besides the physical benefits, there are some benefits concerning mental health, such as in cases of anxiety, depression, and hyperactivity (Lara et al., 2014). The benefits of gym participation are known by audiences from all ages (Silvestri, 2020).

For women, the practice of physical exercise is predominantly motivated by weight management and appearance, while for men the challenge and increased strength are the motives listed (Silva, 2023). In spite of this, health concerns are mentioned as a motivation to exercise by women more than by men (Santos et al., 2019). In a study, women mentioned health and fun first, and only then appearance, when asked about the motivation to participate in lifting weights (Santos et al., 2019). Another study mentioned that questions related to aesthetics are identified as the main reasons for women to engage in physical exercise, as they are influenced by social networks and by the beauty standards spread across them (Silva, 2019; Gültzow et al., 2020).

Silva (2023) refers two types of motivation for the practice of physical exercise, being one more typical of women and the other of men. Extrinsic motivation, as a source for starting to exercise, is attributed to women (Silva, 2023). The extrinsic motivation is

related to behaviours that are not made with the goal of obtaining any sort of reward (Santos et al., 2019). Intrinsic motivation, crucial for maintaining and improving in the practice of physical exercise, is attributed to men (Silva, 2023). This motivation provides energy for the activity and the development of the individual's internal structures (Santos et al., 2019). Both types of motivation can be measured as mentioned in individuals who regularly exercise, as it is possible to obtain different results when analysing individuals which are beginners (Santos et al., 2019).

It is important to determine the reasons that lead women to attend gyms so that their needs can be met (Silvestri, 2020). A 2007 study concluded that there was a difference in the demand for exercise in gyms, being that women had a preference for gymnastics and not for lifting weights (Lessa et al., 2007).

2.2. Social networks

Social networks, a set of applications that allow the creation and exchange of content created by its users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), provide opportunities for young adults to show themselves and receive comments and interactions from other users, being that this content is often altered in order to fit the ideals that social networks propagate (Rounsefell et al., 2020). Frequently, young people pay more attention to health-related information shared on social networks than to those issued by health entities and nutrition or exercise specialists (Rounsefell et al., 2020).

Pictures and the captions which accompany them suggest a sort of perfectionism and success which is not measured by physical performance, but by physical appearance (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). The users who chose to expose themselves to content related to a healthy lifestyle may consequently have the intention of behaving in a similar way to that which they see portrayed on social networks (Sokolova, 2021).

Instagram has become an important marketing tool for brand divulgation, due to its visual content, through pictures and videos (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023). In contrast with traditional media, the pictures on social networks, such as Instagram, are shared by "normal" individuals and do not have commercial interests (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018).

Fitspiration, a trend which is very present on Instagram, promotes physical exercise and a diet as a way to reach a healthy lifestyle (Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017) and it has potential to positively influence physical and mental health (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). One of the positive effects of fitspiration is the increased search for a more muscular body,

abandoning the thin body ideal to which women are accustomed (Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017). The access to information about health and social support are the reasons mentioned as beneficial coming from fitspiration content on social networks (Raggatt et al., 2018).

Physical exercise is the most encouraged way of changing one's body on social networks through fitspiration content (Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017). This type of content motivates users to think about their eating and exercise habits which may have a behavioural change as consequence (Raggatt et al., 2018).

2.3. The influence of social networks

There are few studies that analyse the impact of social networks on health-related behaviours, particularly regarding physical exercise (Durau et al., 2022). Much of the existing literature is focused on the negative influence of social networks content on body image, eating disorders and compulsive exercise (Johnston & Davis, 2019).

Social networks act as an alternative to traditional media which focuses on male sports, by emphasizing women's sports performance (Sabino & Loureiro, 2022). Social networks have the power to defy the typical representation of a female athlete as inferior to a male one, giving women some power over the way they are represented (Thorpe et al., 2017). Social networks influencers act as brands' spokespeople, who can shape attitudes through blogs, tweets, and other publications on social networks (Freberg et al., 2011) and for that reason, partnerships with influencers are beneficial to the brands who choose to use this type of strategy (Coco & Eckert, 2020). Social networks influencers have evolved in the last few years as great marketing tools and can no longer be ignored when developing marketing and communication strategies (Vrontis et al., 2021). The disadvantage that can be found in this type of strategy is that it can seem like hidden publicity for the social networks user (Bellido Turró, 2018). If the influencer shares impersonal content and a lot of publicity, the audience will perceive the persuasive intentions behind this, but if the content is personal, the followers will have no doubts in complying with their product recommendations (Leite & Baptista, 2022). Following this logic, using celebrities in a brand's publicity is perceived as less genuine than using an influencer (Janssen, 2022). Different models and celebrities of the fitness world have a determinant role in stimulating social networks users towards the practice of exercise and the pursue of a healthy lifestyle (Yang, 2017). The accessibility of video and photo content of healthy

recipes also influences the consumer to follow a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle (Yang, 2017).

Fitness influencers are perceived as friends of the social networks users, who follow their advice and recommendations (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019), and can also influence these users in a positive way, motivating them to exercise through their content, for example in YouTube videos (Sokolova, 2021). Parasocial relationships, important in marketing, are created with the influencers, and their content about physical exercise and a healthy lifestyle influence social networks users to change the intentions concerning those topics (Sokolova, 2021). The usage of platforms like Instagram and YouTube has been experiencing growth and, as a consequence, influencers have become figures in which users place their trust and whose opinions influence not only purchase decisions but also behaviour patterns (Janssen et al., 2022). In some cases, consuming content related to physical exercise does not have a positive influence, but a negative one on social networks users, because it can inspire individuals who already exercise but can have a discouraging effect or no effect at all in individuals who do not exercise and will continue no to do so (Sokolova, 2021).

In Portugal, although there is not a great impact of fitness influencers on social networks (Duarte, 2020), women dominate the fitness content on Instagram, inspiring their followers to follow healthy recipes to improve their eating habits, to buy products used and recommended by them, or to participate in the practice of physical exercise by imitating their training programs (Pereira, 2017).

Social networks marketing has an impact on purchase decisions, as it simplifies the access to information about the products and enhances the interest of the consumer, who has at their disposition all the data considered important to make a decision (Razali et al., 2023). Most of the investigation concerning this topic is focused on understanding consumer behaviour on the purchase of products (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023). Although more research is necessary to determine if all platforms or if all types of influencers obtain the same kind of results, it is possible to affirm that social networks influencers have an impact in the purchase of products (Vrontis et al., 2021; Madeira, 2023).

2.4. Motivation for the practice of physical exercise

The connection between physical activity and attaining the beauty standard accepted by society can be motivators for the practice of physical exercise (Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017). The fact that physical exercise is not enough to attain that ideal, as eating habits

play an important role in the results, can lead to frustration due to failure to get the results desired, and can lead to a cease of motivation to exercise (Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017). Social networks content can behave as a reminder to exercise, motivating the individual, depending on their previous condition regarding motivation (Wood & Watson, 2023). In the literature, social networks are seen as an influence on body image and consumer behaviour both in a positive and in a negative way (Yang, 2017).

On the one hand, trends such as fitspiration can positively influence social networks users to opt for a healthy lifestyle through the practice of physical exercise and a balanced diet (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). On the other hand, they can have a negative impact due to being limited to the representation of a restricted group of body types (Dunlop et al., 2016).

Social networks and influencers can behave as allies in promoting health habits through the use of technology in the digital era (Lutkenhaus et al., 2019), since social networks are one of the elements to contribute to a shift in perceptions, attitudes and beliefs regarding nutrition and food, in the last 50 years (Vaterlaus et al., 2015).

It is plausible to conclude that social networks can influence consumers who view fitness content to participate in the practice of physical exercise, through, for instance, body transformation publications (Abeln, 2023). Despite this and what was mentioned beforehand, it is possible to conclude that more research is needed in this field to help determine the real effects of social networks on the physical activity level and eating habits and patterns of individuals (Goodyear et al., 2021). It is so, because it is not possible to determine if a manifestation of intention to participate in an activity or in buying a product actually lead to the participation or the purchase (Neal, 2017).

The constant evolution of technology and of the techniques used across the different social networks platforms also impose constant research in this field, in order to improve the marketing strategies used (Madeira, 2023). As such, it is possible to say that Covid 19 contributed to a digitalization of physical exercise which continues until today (Godefroy, 2020).

2.5. Covid 19 impact

The fitness industry suffered a significant impact with the Covid 19 pandemic, which forced some spaces to close, temporarily, or even permanently (Rutgers, 2023) and lead to an increase of physical exercise at home through online platforms and social networks (Durau et al., 2022; Godefroy, 2020).

During the Covid 19 pandemic, fitness influencers guided their followers to practice physical exercise and it was during this period that online training and at-home training developed substantially (Godefroy, 2020). It was also during this period that many Instagram settings, which had been little explored previously, started being used by fitness influencers, in order to reach their followers (Godefroy, 2020).

After the period of greatest impact, when there was a big recession in active members and turnover volume numbers, gyms recovered these indicators during the year of 2021 (Pedragosa et al., 2023). This number of active members consists of a bigger percentage of women than of men, which may lead to the conclusion that more women practice physical activity in a gym or club context (Pedragosa et al., 2023). What this number does not reveal is if the activity carried out by women consists or not of training with weights. By observing the study of fitness trends in Portugal for 2023, males chose the trend “strength-based training with free weights” as number 6 on their top 10, whereas females do not mention that trend in their top 10 (Franco et al., 2023). There is a need to know if there is, after the reopening of spaces in a post pandemic scenario, a tendency of augmentation of the number of women enrolled in gyms, what are the motivations for it, and if social networks and the content they consume, have an influence in that decision.

2.6. Conclusion

The goal of this review was to analyse the topics of fitness culture, benefits of weight training for women, motivations for women to exercise, exercise motivated by the internet, and the impact of Covid on the fitness industry. This review of literature allowed for a detailed vision of what has already been studied and analysed concerning this topic, as well as identifying the gaps in existing literature.

There is a need for further research to better understand the real effects of social networks content on individuals’ activity levels and eating habits. The evolution of gym memberships after the pandemic regards the trends in male vs female gym participation. There is a need to conclude whether there is an influence from social networks on these trends.

3. Methodology

In order to better comprehend social networks impact as well as Covid 19 impact on women participation in gyms, a review of literature is an important first step, but it does not allow for a conclusion.

To investigate further, different variables need to be considered. The process of comparing information from different sources allows for a better analysis of the research questions, by combining and comparing multiple points of view (Minayo et al., 2005). Data triangulation, as illustrated bellow, allows for a holistic perception of all the data collected through different methods and in different moments of the research. Therefore, this approach was defined as best practice, allowing for a strategic dialogue between review of literature, interviews, and questionnaires.



Figure 1 Data triangulation (Self elaboration)

The goal of the research is:

- To understand if women still prefer gymnastics over lifting weights.
- To grasp if social networks content influences behaviours such as the practice of physical exercise, a balanced diet, and a healthy lifestyle overall.
- To infer if the increase in female participation in gyms and clubs can be attributed to social networks.

Because the goal of the research is to investigate these topics regarding the district of Viseu, a small sample was defined from the beginning. A list of gyms and health clubs in the different councils of Viseu was made.

The gyms/health clubs were chosen based on the following criteria:

- Gyms attended by males and females.
- Diverse sample (as possible) in terms of location within the district of Viseu (at least one gym per council, in every council where there is a gym).

3.1. Interviews

An invitation for the interview was sent by email to each gym, specifically aimed at managers and technical directors, people with a position that allows them to be more aware of the information needed for the research.

In person interviews was the chosen method as it is a better option which allows the interviewer to better understand nuances and physical cues given by the interviewees (Minayo et al., 2005).

From the list of 28 gyms who were sent the email, 10 accepted to participate in the interview. The interviews were scheduled through several weeks, as they depended on the interviewee's availability.

To better collect the data, a recorder was used for the duration of the interviews. This allowed for transcription and better analysis of the interview content.

All interviewees were sent a document regarding the aim of the research, their rights for the duration of the study, and their confidentiality and privacy. Besides, all interviewees were informed of the recording of the interview, which was repeated at the beginning of each one of the interviews.

Information regarding each interview is resumed in the table below. The average duration of the interview was 16 minutes, with the shortest one being 7 minutes and the longest one being 31 minutes. This was due to the fact that some interviewees spoke about what was asked and carried the conversation without the interviewer needing to move on to the following questions.

Table 1 Interviews

Interviewee				Interview
Code	Council	Gender	Position	Duration
E1	Armamar	M	Technical Director	7:11:00
E2	Carregal do Sal	M	Technical Director	17:12:00
E3	Lamego	M	Technical Director	16:43:00
E4	Mangualde	M	Manager	24:54:00
E5	Oliveira de Frades	F	Manager	7:00:00
E6	Tarouca	M	Manager	13:02:00
E7	Tondela	F	Technical Director	12:03:00
E8	Vila Nova de Paiva	M	Technical Director	9:47:00
E9	Viseu	F	Technical Director	31:26:00
E10	Viseu - Crossfit	M	Technical Director	15:44:00

The interviews, which were conducted in Portuguese, were transcribed as faithfully as possible, translated into English, and extensively analysed (APPENDIX 1).

Each interview followed the same line of questions in order to attain the information needed for the analysis at hand. For the analysis of the interviews, the following topics were considered:

- How the gym dealt with the Covid 19 pandemic
- How the times were following the pandemic
- How the number and gender of members changed over the last few years
- How social networks and influencers impact gym participation
- Women in gyms

3.1.1. How the gym dealt with the Covid 19 pandemic:

All the interviews started with a question regarding the Covid 19 Pandemic, to get an idea of how each gym dealt with the situation at the time. From the 10 interviewees, two referred that the gyms started their activity during the pandemic. One of them only exists because the manager, who used to work at another gym in the same town, which closed due to renting conflicts because of the pandemic, decided to start her own gym.

The other eight had already been open for some years before Covid 19. One of these eight, had a different manager at the time of the beginning of the pandemic, who wanted to close, but the current manager took the project and kept the gym open.

From this it is possible to understand, as E4 referred, that “in terms of businesses, it was the most affected sector at a national level during the pandemic” and that “those who were not able to inject equity have closed down”.

Every interviewee referred the safety measures that were implemented at the time of the Covid 19 pandemic, because of government rules. E1 mentioned “no access to the changing rooms”, E3 stated that “we could not have group classes” and E10 remembered the “spray bottle of disinfectant and paper” to clean the surfaces.

Most of the interviewees recall the alternatives used during those months to keep members active and engaged in physical exercise. E3 said “we had online classes, online content that we produced and then made available to clients” and E10 referred “we did online training, two classes a day via Zoom”. Most also refer that it was possible for members to rent some material to use at home or for outdoor training. During the pandemic gyms relied on online platforms and “social networks was used a lot”, as E2 mentioned.

It is possible to conclude that the pandemic significantly affected the gym industry, with closures, operational changes and financial challenges being common. To keep members active, despite all the safety measures and government regulations, gyms heavily relied on online classes and content creation.

3.1.2. How the times were following the pandemic:

After some of the restrictions were lifted, gyms were able to reopen and resume their activities. As E6 said, “people came with fear” and E4 mentioned that “people were afraid of Covid”. E2 confirmed that “there was a lot of apprehension about people getting back together and making contact” and E1 stated that there was “a little less affluence” at the time.

In the first months, the response was not the same everywhere. E8 mentioned that “when we opened again it was a disaster. Drops of over 80%”. E4 and E5 both affirmed that “people created other habits” and “many people started training outside on the streets and got so used to it that they haven’t been back at the gyms”, mentioning that “we still haven’t reached our goals” regarding the number of members at their gyms. E7 said that “when we reopened after the pandemic, we had some difficulty. A lot of people cancelled the gym”, but finished saying that after the pandemic they gained more members because people “who started exercising at home during the pandemic, had this need to do it in the gym”. On that same note, E9 said that “the figures are very similar to 2019”, and E3 and E10 mentioned that they have had an interesting growing rate ever since the pandemic. Even though there seems to exist a growing tendency in terms of members at gyms in the district of Viseu, E9 referred that there is only a “7% penetration rate” which is very low when compared to “25%, which is the European average”.

It is possible to conclude that the first months after the pandemic were challenging. Some gyms experienced significant declines in attendance and other fluctuations in membership numbers post-reopening. Nowadays the situation has mostly returned to what it was before Covid 19, and there was an overall growing trend in gym memberships in the Viseu district. The penetration rate of gyms in Viseu remains low when compared to other European countries and this suggests potential for further growth and market expansion in the region, as well as in the rest of the country.

3.1.3. How the number and gender of members changed over the last few years:

E1 mentioned that the numbers are “back to normal”, referring to the period before the pandemic. E2 said that the number of members “has been growing” and that “we have been growing and social networks has helped”. Regarding age, E3, E6 and E9 referred that they noticed “more youngsters” in the recent years, which E9 mentioned being a consequence of “a generation more concerned with health than the previous one”. E8 affirmed that their members are “from all age groups. From secondary school to older women”. Regarding gender, E3 said “we’ve noticed an increase in women doing strength training in the exercise room”. E6 even mentioned that they have more women at the gym and “mostly younger ones”. E5 and E8 strongly affirmed “we definitely have more women (than men)” and “we always had more women than men”.

It is possible to conclude that in the years following the pandemic, gyms reported a recovery in their membership numbers. There is a noticeable trend towards a younger demographic which can be due to increased health consciousness among younger generations. There is also a growing presence of women in gyms. This reflects a change in societal attitudes towards health and fitness.

3.1.4. How social networks and influencers impact gym participation:

When asked about whether social networks impacts gym participation the answer was unanimous. E4 said “absolutely. absolutely”, E5 “yes, a lot”, E8 stated “I believe so”. All other interviewees agreed that social networks impacts gym participation. The majority also agreed that this impact can be positive or negative, depending on the situation.

E8 mentioned “I believe there is a direct influence of social networks. On the one hand the content has a positive influence. On the other hand, there are some less positive situations”. E1 stated that “there are influencers who work well and do their job well and there are others who are interested in gaining followers” and that “what is posted on social networks can have a positive or a negative influence because it depends on each person’s interpretation”. E5 stated something similar saying that “there is good and there is bad. But people are more influenced by the bad. Because the good stuff costs more, it’s more work to follow”. E6 also said that “there is a lot of good information on the internet and on social networks that people follow. But there’s also a lot of bad information”.

The positive impact mentioned by E3 was that “they allow people to get to the venues (gyms) and that’s already a starting point”. E6 stated that “there is a lot of good content, people need to check if it is adaptable to their lifestyle”.

The negative impact that was mentioned was regarding the idea that people may have from consuming certain types of content on social networks. E7 stated that people “go to gyms to achieve those goals” referring to bodies they see on social networks, and E6 said that because of social networks “there are many people that want to achieve in a month what they can achieve in a year”. E4 affirmed that nowadays people “want quick results, motivated by what they see on social networks”. On this topic, E4 and E8 even mentioned the dangers of “anabolic steroids” which are used by influencers to reach certain types of bodies. E4 affirmed that “there is a lot of drug use”, motivated by the bodies seen on social networks, to obtain physical goals.

When asked about social networks influencers E10 said that “there are influencers who share things that will never reach sedentary people who look at the publications and think they will never do that and it’s not for them. And then there is another group of influencers who work on what people need. And you have to know how to look for that”. This means that in some cases, social networks content can have a discouraging effect or no effect at all in individuals who do not exercise.

When asked about the use of social networks as a way to gather members for their gyms, some interviews said they tried to work in that sense. E2 said “we try to be present so that people talk about us”. On the other hand, E10 stated “We don’t use our social networks much as a way of attracting clients. We encourage people to do sport and invite them to come and try it out”. It is possible to conclude that, even with social networks being a great tool, the word of mouth is still used as the main source for gathering clients.

Regarding the influence of social networks in gym participation related to the way people consume and interact with social networks content an interesting contrast was found. While E1 said that they perceived an influence “Especially among the younger generations. In older people we do not perceive the influence of this type of situation as much because access to them isn’t as easy and use isn’t as recurrent”, E9 affirmed “On the other hand, I do not feel that the great consumers of social networks at the moment are the youngsters. The biggest interactions we have on our social networks are from people from 35 to 55 years old, as unbelievable as it may seem. Maybe because youngsters are not so keen on liking or commenting. They may see it, but they do not interact. In terms of interactions, we have an older audience that has more time, is more stable in terms of work. And there we have an interesting audience in terms of interaction”. This contrast may be due to the location of these gyms, as E1 is located in a smaller council and E9 is located in the district capital. Future investigation regarding this

specific topic could be of interest, to help determine which age group is more likely to consume certain type of content, and how gyms can benefit from this knowledge.

It is possible to conclude that all interviewees agreed that social networks has a significant impact on gym participation. Both positive and negative impacts of social networks were acknowledged. Positive influences included providing access to exercise-related content and bringing people to gyms. Negative influences included unrealistic body expectations, the desire for fast results, and the potential promotion of unhealthy practices like steroid use. There is a general recognition of different types of influencers, some providing motivating and others providing discouraging content. The impact of social networks content can vary depending on the content consumed and the demographic targeted.

3.1.5. Women in gyms:

During the interviews, the relationship between women and their participation in weight training and specifically in gyms was mentioned. E3 referred that “strength training is directly linked to improvements in health indicators. And women are already more concerned about this” and E5 affirmed that “As well as group classes, women are increasingly doing strength training. And they like it because they understand the benefits for their bodies, their aesthetics, and their health”. Also mentioning the health benefits of strength training, E2 said that “women experience a lot of changes in their bodies right from adolescence and they should start then” and that “if we have a stronger muscles, it will help with this specific physical and morphological change in women”.

When asked about the topic of traditional gender roles, their implications on the practice of weight training by females, and the lack of knowledge in women concerning training with weights, as a consequence of social and cultural values enforced on women E6 affirmed “I believe the stigma does not exist anymore. The idea that women do not want to train upper body because they will get too big. Nowadays this does not need to be said. The stigma that a girl does not want to train with weights does not exist anymore”. E8 mentioned that “there is a lot of interest from women in coming to train” and E9 mentioned “we’ve always seen women and men training in the room. We don’t see many differences in that sense” and that “maybe women have overcome some of the myths about strength training and no longer feel out of their depth doing it”.

In conclusion, there is a growing trend of women participating in strength training. This suggests a shift away from gyms being predominantly male-dominated spaces. Women

are overcoming myths and stereotypes associated with strength training, and the stigma associated with women participating in weight training is becoming outdated.

A summary of the topics analysed through the interviews is in the table that follows.

Table 2 Summary of the interviews

<p>HOW THE GYM DEALT WITH THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC</p>	<p>The gym industry underwent significant impact from the pandemic, experiencing closures, operational shifts, and financial hurdles. Despite safety measures and government regulations, gyms leaned on online classes and content to keep members engaged and active (E3 said "we had online classes, online content that was made by us for the members").</p>
<p>HOW THE TIMES WERE FOLLOWING THE PANDEMIC</p>	<p>The initial months following the pandemic posed challenges. Certain gyms witnessed drops in attendance and fluctuating membership numbers after reopening. (E7 said "many people who started doing exercise at home during the pandemic, felt the need to do it in a gym"). Nowadays, the situation has mostly reverted to pre-Covid 19 scenario, with an overall uptick in gym memberships observed in the Viseu district.</p>
<p>HOW THE NUMBER AND GENDER OF MEMBERS CHANGED OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS</p>	<p>In the years after the pandemic, gyms noted a growth in their membership numbers. A shift towards a younger demographic is apparent (E9 mentioned being a consequence of "a generation that is more concerned with health"). Additionally, there is a greater representation of women in gyms (E4 affirmed that "there was some growth" in terms of women in the weight room"), reflecting a shift in societal perceptions regarding health and fitness.</p>
<p>HOW SOCIAL MEDIA AND INFLUENCERS IMPACT GYM PARTICIPATION</p>	<p>Consensus among interviewees confirmed the influence of social media on gym engagement. They acknowledged positive effects, such as attracting individuals to gyms, and negative effects, such as unrealistic body ideals and expectations (E8 mentioned "I believe there is a direct influence of social media. On the one hand the content has a positive influence. On the other hand, there are some less positive situations").</p>
<p>WOMEN IN GYMS</p>	<p>A rising trend shows more women engaging in strength training, indicating a shift in gyms being predominantly male-dominated environments. Women are dispelling myths and stereotypes related to strength training, making the stigma surrounding female participation in weight training outdated (E5 affirmed that "Besides group classes, women are participating more in strength training. Because they like it and they understand the benefits for the body, the aesthetics, and for their health").</p>

3.1.6. Conclusion

Considering all of the above, it is unlikely that the 2007 trend of women having a preference for gymnastics over lifting weights remains today, in 2024. Several factors suggest a shift in preferences towards weight training among women in the various

councils of Viseu. There is a growing understanding of the benefits of strength training for health, aesthetics and overall well-being and women are feeling more empowered and confident to engage in strength training.

Based on all of this, it is possible to affirm that, according to the interviewees, social networks content influences behaviours such as the practice of physical exercise, a balanced diet, and a healthy lifestyle overall. While positive and negative influences were recognized, all interviewees agreed that social networks has a significant impact on gym participation. Some interviewees noted that social networks content can provide motivation and information that encourages people to engage in physical exercise. According to the interviews, undoubtedly, social networks plays a significant role in shaping individuals' choices in these areas.

The increase in female participation in gyms and clubs can be attributed to social networks, but not solely. Even so, the awareness and the information existent in social networks platforms can make more women aware of available fitness options and encourage them to participate. Fitness content also serve as source of inspiration and motivation for women to take similar steps towards a healthier lifestyle.

While social networks played a role in increasing female participation in gyms and clubs, other factors such as changing societal attitudes towards fitness, greater awareness of health benefits and improved accessibility to gyms may have also contributed to this trend. It is important to consider a combination of these factors when analysing the existing rise in female gym participation.

During the conducting of these 10 interviews, it was interesting to observe that the majority of interviewees, being them technical directors or managers, are men (7/10). The fact that the majority of interviewees who are gym managers or technical directors are men suggests that leadership in the fitness industry may still be male-dominated, even though female participation in gyms has been rising. Future investigation could help determine if this is related or not to gender roles and stereotypes in areas regarding sports and in areas regarding power positions.

3.2. Questionnaires

After each interview, the interviewees were informed that they would soon after be receiving a questionnaire to be filled by female members of their gyms. The most widely used method for gathering primary data in marketing research is the questionnaire, with online questionnaires being especially favoured due to their cost-effectiveness and speed

compared to traditional methods (Malhotra et al., 2020). The questionnaires, done in the Google Forms platform, were sent to the interviewees for them to distribute in their gyms, with the indication that they were to be filled by female gym participants.

To get the number of answers that allowed for an accurate analysis and conclusions, the chosen methodology was a representative study with a stratified sampling. Stratification enhances sample accuracy and reduces costs by dividing the target population into key segments and selecting appropriately sized samples from each segment (Stephan, 1941). To be fully representative of the population, the sample must include women from each gym in their true proportions. To determine the number of answers needed from each gym, so that the sample is representative of the total population, the proportion of women in each gym in relation to the total of women in all gyms was calculated. Dividing that in equal proportion, the number of answers is as follows on the table:

Table 3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires			
Council	Gym	Number of female members	Number of respondents
Armamar	Complexo de ginásio e piscinas de Armamar	75	13
Carregal do Sal	ADEFitness	50	9
Lamego	Fitness Factory	75	12
Mangualde	Generation Fit Center	150	29
Oliveira de Frades	100 Kalorias	120	19
Tarouca	Update Gym	50	8
Tondela	FFitness Club Tondela	170	32
Vila Nova de Paiva	Reset Gym	60	11
Viseu	FFitness Health Club	200	37
Viseu - Crossfit	Viriato Crossfit	60	10
	TOTAL	1010	180

From the 180 respondents, 13 (7,2%) are from Armamar, 9 (5%) from Carregal do Sal, 12 (6,7%) from Lamego, 29 (16,1%) from Mangualde, 19 (10,6%) from Oliveira de Frades, 8 (4,4%) from Tarouca, 32 (17,8%) from Tondela, 11 (6,1%) from Vila Nova de Paiva and 47 (26,1%) from Viseu.

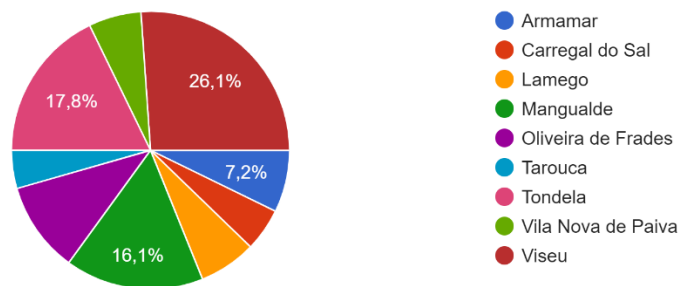


Figure 2 Council where the respondents attend the gym

The questionnaires, which were written in Portuguese, were translated into English, and extensively analysed (APPENDIX 2).

Every woman from the 10 different gyms answered the same questions in the same order to attain the information needed for the analysis at hand. For the analysis of the answers, the following topics were considered:

- Age
- Academic qualifications
- Occupation
- How long have you been going to the gym?
- What are the reasons you go to the gym?
- Type of activity
- Social networks impact

The questionnaires started with some questions to determine the demographics of each woman answering the questions.

3.2.1. Age:

From the 180 women who filled the questionnaire, 7 (3,9%) are younger than 18 years old, 29 (16,1%) are between 18 and 24 years old, 73 (40,6%) are between 25 and 34 years old, being the age group where the majority of respondents are included, 35 (19,4%) are between 35 and 44 years old, 29 (16,1%) are between 45 and 54 years old, 6 (3,3%) are between 55 and 64 years old, and only 1 (0,6%) is older than 65 years old, as illustrated in the graphic below.

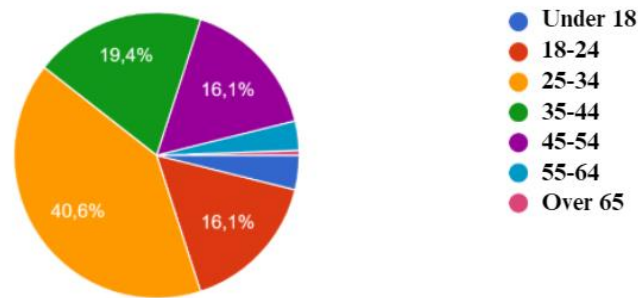


Figure 3 Age

From this, it is possible to conclude that most women attending gyms, in Viséu, are between 25 and 34 years old, indicating that this is the prime age for gym participation. This can be due to various factors, such as lifestyle changes, a focus on fitness and health during this age, or having more flexible schedules compared to older age groups. Women aged 18-24 and those aged 35-44 also show significant attendance, indicating a focus in maintaining health and fitness as they age, with participation gradually declining after 45. The youngest and oldest groups have the lowest representation, suggesting that gym participation peaks during young adulthood and early middle age, with less involvement at the extremes of the age spectrum.

3.2.2. Academic qualifications:

As for academic qualifications, 67 (37,2%) of the respondents have the 12th grade, being the option with more answers from the 180 women, followed by 65 (36,1%) with a bachelor's degree. 30 (16,7%) of the respondents have a master's degree and 5 (2,8%) have a doctorate. The remaining 13 (7,6%) answered with other options which are non-degree titles according to the European Qualifications Framework.

3.2.3. Occupation:

From the 180 women who answered the questionnaire, 19 (10,6%) are students, 139 (77,2%) have a full-time job, being the group where the majority of respondents are included, 7 (3,9%) have a part-time job, 4 (2,2%) have no job and 5 (2,8%) are retired. The remaining 6 (3,6%) gave other answers.

3.2.4. How long have you been going to the gym?

When asked this question, 46 (25,6%) of the respondents answered that they have been going to the gym for less than a year, 20 (11,1%) for a year, 41 (22,8%) for between 2 and 3 years, 20 (11,1%) for between 3 and 4 years, 8 (4,4%) for between 4 and 5 years, and 45 (25%) for over 5 years.

3.2.5. What are the reasons you go to the gym?

The most mentioned reason for going to the gym was “Physical health”, being chosen by 146 (81,1%) of the respondents. 114 (63,3%) indicated “Mental health”, 64 (35,6%) indicated “Aesthetics”, 96 (53,3%) indicated “Self-esteem”, 27 (15%) indicated “Socialising”, 7 (3,9%) indicated “Pregnancy and/or postpartum”, 52 (28,9%) indicated “Disease prevention”, 64 (35,6%) indicated “Personal goals”, and 7 (3,9%) indicated “Social networks”, as illustrated in the graphic below.

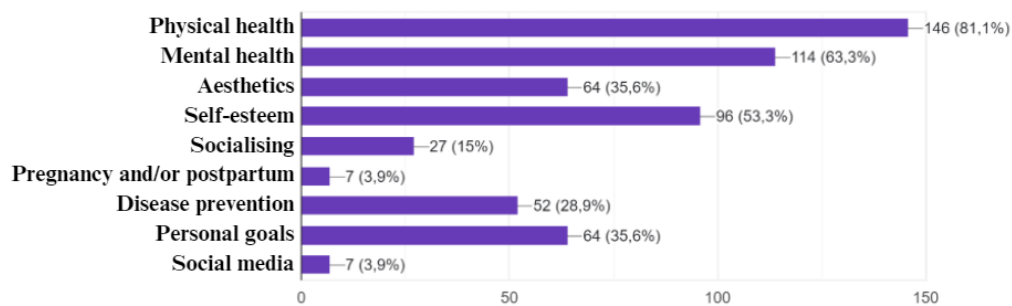


Figure 4 "What are the reasons you go to the gym?"

3.2.6 Type of activity:

When asked about the type of activity they preferred in the gym, 140 (77,8%) of the respondents answered “Weight room”, 64 (35,6%) answered “Group classes” and 58 (32,2%) answered “Cardiovascular exercises”, as shown in the graphic below.

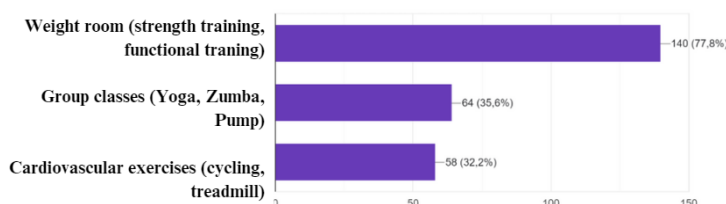


Figure 5 "What kind of activities do you prefer in the gym?"

From the 180 women who answered the questionnaire, only 11 (6,1%) said that they do not attend the weight room at the gym. 56 (31,1%) attend 1 or 2 times a week, 102 (56,7%) attend 3 to 5 times a week, and 11 (6,1%) attend more than 5 times a week. It is possible to conclude that a significant majority of women who attend the gym engage with the weight room regularly. With only 6,1% of respondents not using the weight room at all, it is clear that strength training is a prevalent component of women’s fitness routines. The frequent engagement with weight room activities highlights the growing recognition of the benefits of strength training among women.

3.2.7 Social networks impact:

When asked “How often do you use social networks platforms?” 121 (67,2%) answered “Every day”, 26 (14,4%) answered “Several times a week”, 17 (9,4%) answered “A few times a week”, 15 (8,3%) answered “Rarely”, and 1 (0,6%) answered “Never”, as shown in the graphic below.

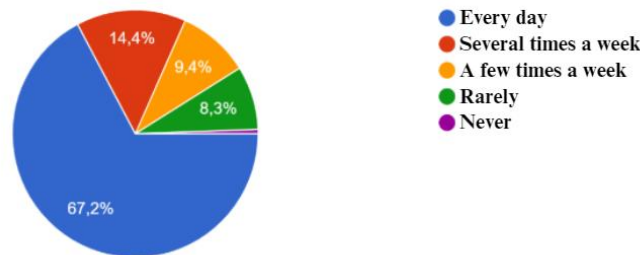


Figure 6 ”How often do you use social networks platforms?”

When asked “Do you consume fitness-related content on social networks?” 142 (78,9%) of women answered “Yes” and 38 (21,1%) answered “No”, as illustrated in the graphic below.

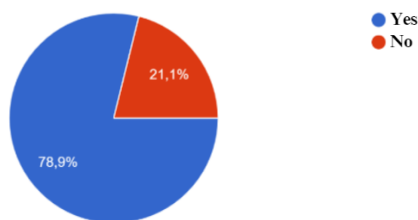


Figure 7 ”Do you consume fitness-related content on social networks?”

Because 142 women said that they consumed fitness-related content on social networks, the following questions “If so, how often?” and “If so, what type of content?” should only have received 142 answers each. Both received a total of 151 answers, meaning 9 people who answered “No” to the first part of the question, also answered to these questions. Due to this, the analysis of these results may be slightly off from the reality, but it is as follows.

To the question “If so, how often?”, 52 (34,4%) answered “Every day”, 53 (35,1%) answered “Several times a week”, 32 (21,2%) answered “A few times a week”, and 14 (9,3%) answered “Rarely”.

To the question “If so, what type of content?” 117 (77,5%) answered “Training and exercise”, 96 (63,6%) answered “Nutrition and food”, 29 (19,2%) answered “Supplementation”, 86 (57%) answered “Motivation and inspiration”, 18 (11,9%) answered “Product and equipment reviews”, 20 (13,2%) answered “Events and challenges”, and 23 (15,2%) answered “Community and interaction”, as illustrated in the graphic below.

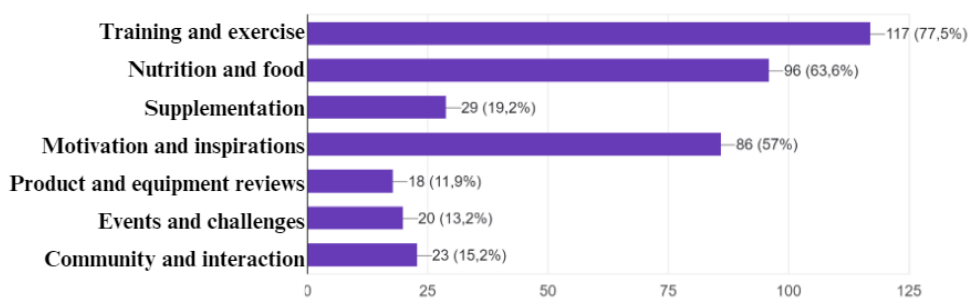


Figure 8 "If so, what type of content?"

When asked “Do you follow any influencers on social networks?” 91 (50,6%) answered “Yes” and 89 (49,4%) answered “No”, as shown in the graphic bellow.

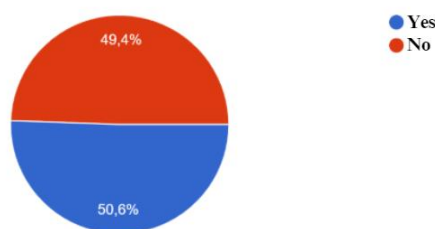


Figure 9 "Do you follow any influencers on social networks?"

Despite the number of women answering “Yes” (91), the following question “If so, who?” only received 56 answers. The list of influencers mentioned was made into a word cloud (<https://worditout.com/word-cloud/create>), shown below, displaying the influencers who were mentioned more often in a bigger size, and the influencers who were mentioned only once in a smaller size.



Figure 10 “If so, who?”

From the list of influencers mentioned, it is possible to conclude that the participants in the study follow a wide variety of fitness influencers, both male and female, from different areas of expertise. Influencers mentioned range from fitness trainers, bodybuilders, and athletes to lifestyle and wellness personalities. The repeated mention of specific influencers, such as Tiago Guimarães, Francisco Soares, and Catte Fitness indicate their strong presence and popularity among this audience. Additionally, both national and international influencers are mentioned.

Table 4 Most mentioned influencers

<p>TIAGO GUIMARÃES</p>	<p>Tiago Guimarães is a fitness influencer who shares workout tips, training routines, and healthy lifestyle advice. He has a large online following, particularly on YouTube, where he motivates people to improve their fitness and adopt healthier habits. His content is focused on strength training and practical fitness strategies.</p>
<p>FRANCISCO SOARES</p>	<p>Francisco Soares is a fitness influencer and personal trainer who shares workout routines, fitness tips, and motivational posts on Instagram, helping people achieve their fitness goals. His content focuses on strength training, healthy habits, and body transformation.</p>
<p>CATTE FITNESS</p>	<p>Catte Fitness is a fitness influencer who shares workout routines and fitness tips, focusing on strength training and healthy living. She aims to help women reach their fitness goals and promotes body positivity through her content, which is known for being practical and motivational.</p>

To the question “Have you tried a training or exercise programme because you saw it on social networks?” 100 (55,6%) answered “yes” and 80 (44,4%) answered “No”, as illustrated in the graphic below.

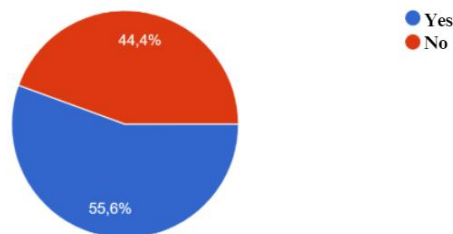


Figure 11 ”Have you tried a training program or exercise because you saw it on social networks?”

To the question “Have you tried a recipe because you saw it on social networks?” 145 (80,6%) answered “Yes” and 35 (19,4%) answered “No”. It is possible to conclude from this that social networks has a strong influence on dietary choices. This high percentage indicates that social networks is a significant source of inspiration and information for cooking and nutrition, leading many to experiment with new recipes.

To the final question “Do you believe that content on social networks promotes healthy behaviour?” 152 (84,4%) answered “Yes” and 28 (15,6%) answered “No”, as illustrated in the graphic below.

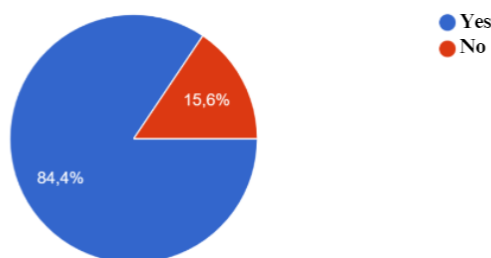


Figure 12 ”Do you believe that content on social networks promotes healthy behaviour?”

3.2.8 Analysis

From this data, it is possible to conclude that women attending gyms in Viseu generally have a strong educational background, with a significant portion having completed at least secondary education (12th grade) or holding higher education degrees. Over half of the respondents have a bachelor’s or more advanced degrees, indicating that gym-goers are likely to be well-educated. This suggests that education level may correlate with gym

attendance, potentially reflecting higher health awareness and lifestyle choices among more educated women.

It is possible to infer that the vast majority of these women attending gyms are employed full-time, suggesting that gym attendance is popular among working professionals, likely due to financial stability and the ability to afford gym memberships. A smaller, yet significant percentage, are students, indicating some interest in gym participation among younger women still in education, which might reflect their active lifestyle or health-consciousness.

From this data, it is possible to observe that gym-goers from these councils have a wide range of experience levels. A significant portion (25,6%) are relatively new to the gym, suggesting that the gym attracts a steady influx of newcomers. Additionally, 25% of respondents have been going to the gym for over five years, indicating a strong base of long-term members who are likely to be highly committed to their fitness routines.

The distribution of gym membership durations can reveal insights into the impact of Covid 19 on the fitness industry. A high percentage of respondents have been gym-goers for less than a year, which can indicate a surge in new memberships as people finally returned to gyms or began their fitness journeys post-pandemic. Simultaneously, 25% of respondents have been attending gyms for over five years, reflecting the persistence of long-term members who either maintained their commitment through home workouts during the pandemic or have returned to their regular gym routines. This mixed membership profile points to a successful recovery phase for the fitness industry, showing resilience and an effective response to the pandemic disruptions.

The data reveals that a substantial majority of these women prefer the weight room, which challenges some common stereotypes about women and strength training. Traditionally, there has been a stereotype associated with women being less interested in or less engaged with strength training compared to men, often favouring cardiovascular exercises or group classes. This data shows that a significant portion of women are actively choosing to engage in weight training, indicating a strong interest in building strength and muscle. The fact that weight room activities are the most preferred choice suggests that women are increasingly embracing strength training as a central part of their fitness routines. This reflects a shift towards breaking traditional stereotypes and emphasizes that women are motivated by the benefits of weight training.

From this data, it is possible to conclude that social networks is a significant part of the daily lives of most women who attend the gym in these councils of Viseu. The majority

of respondents use social networks platforms every day, indicating that these platforms are a regular part of their routines.

This widespread use of social networks could influence various aspects of gym-goers' lives, including fitness motivation, trends, and possibly even their perceptions of health and exercise. However, despite the high usage rates, the earlier data showing that only 3,9% cited social networks as a reason for going to the gym suggests that while social networks is frequently used, it may not be a major driver of gym attendance compared to health and personal fitness goals.

From this, it is possible to conclude that a significant majority of these women who attend the gym consume fitness-related content on social networks. This suggests that fitness-related content is a popular and influential aspect of their social networks experience, but it is only one of many factors influencing gym attendance and workout habits. This also reveals that a large majority of women from these gyms engage with fitness-related content as a regular part of their social networks experience.

The most popular types of fitness-related content consumed on social networks among the women who answered the questionnaire are focused on training and exercise, and nutrition and food. This suggests that the primary interest lies in practical, actionable information related to workouts and dietary guidance. The data highlights a strong preference for content that provides direct value in terms of training and nutrition, with motivational content also playing a significant role, while other types of content have more niche appeal.

From this, it is possible to infer that social networks influencers have a moderately significant presence among the women surveyed. This indicates a fairly even split, suggesting that while a substantial portion of respondents engage with fitness influencers, an almost equal number do not. The close balance also suggests that influencer content is not universally dominant and that many women may rely on other sources of fitness information or inspiration.

The variety of influencers mentioned likely reflects the different motivations for following fitness content, such as for motivation, workout inspiration, nutritional advice, or general lifestyle tips. It also shows the significant impact that influencers can have on shaping fitness behaviours and attitudes. It is notable that from the most mentioned influencers, only one is a woman. This may indicate that the respondents are more influenced by male fitness figures, which could reflect broader societal trends where male trainers often dominate fitness media and social platforms. This could point to a

perception that male influencers are more authoritative or credible in the fitness space, potentially due to historical representations in fitness. This might also indicate that social networks and fitness culture are still evolving, and as more women engage in weight training, the influence of female trainers may grow, leading to a more balanced representation in the future. These findings could spark discussions on representation in fitness, the influence of social networks, and how it shapes preferences and behaviours among women in the gym.

From this data, it is possible to observe that a significant number of women who attend the gym have been influenced by social networks to try new training or exercise programs. This indicates that social networks has a substantial impact on their fitness decisions, leading them to explore and adopt programs they encounter online. Conversely, a great number of respondents have not tried a training program based on social networks content, suggesting that while social networks influences many, it does not drive all fitness-related decisions.

It is evident, from this analysis, that social networks has a notable impact on both fitness and dietary behaviours regarding this group of women. However, the influence on dietary choices appears to be more pronounced, with a larger proportion of women using social networks to explore new recipes compared to those influenced to try a new exercise program. It is possible to conclude that a majority of women believe that social networks content promotes healthy behaviour. This indicates a strong perception that the content they encounter online positively influences their health and wellness practices.

The data reflects a general consensus that social networks has a beneficial role in encouraging healthy behaviours, reinforcing the idea that fitness and nutrition-related content on these platforms is perceived as valuable and motivational by most women.

3.3. Conclusion

The analysis of this questionnaire provides valuable insights into the gym-going habits and social networks usage among women from the 10 gyms in question. Most gym-goers are in the 25 to 34 age range and have at least a secondary education, with many being full-time workers. The data shows a diverse range of gym attendance durations, with a significant portion having been gym members for over five years, indicating both long-term commitment and a rebound in attendance after Covid 19.

The primary reasons for going to the gym focus on improving physical and mental health, with self-esteem and aesthetics also being important factors. This highlights a strong

emphasis on personal well-being rather than external validation or social networks influence. Despite high daily engagement with social networks, only a small percentage cites it as a major motivation for gym attendance, suggesting that personal health goals are more influential.

Regarding social networks's influence, a considerable number of women consume fitness-related content, and many have tried new exercise programs and recipes based on social networks content. This shows that social networks is a significant source of inspiration and information for these women. A large majority of respondents believe that social networks content promotes healthy behaviour, reflecting the view that online content can positively impact health and wellness practices.

It is possible to infer that while social networks plays an important role in providing inspiration and motivation, personal health goals and long-standing fitness commitments are the primary drivers of gym attendance. Social networks complements these motivations.

It is also possible to conclude that women who attend the gym in the various councils of Viseu are primarily motivated by health-related factors, with a strong emphasis on improving both physical and mental health. This indicates that the primary reasons for gym attendance are focused around overall well-being. Self-esteem, aesthetics, disease prevention and personal goals are also significant motivators, highlighting the importance of body image and personal confidence in fitness routines, and reflecting a focus on long-term health benefits and achieving individual fitness goals. Additionally, concerns related to pregnancy and postpartum are specific to a smaller group, indicating that while these are important, they are less common among the broader gym-going population. Overall, the data shows that women prioritize health-related benefits and personal goals when deciding to go to the gym, with social and aesthetic factors playing a secondary role.

The data indicates that social networks has a relatively minor influence on women's motivations to go to the gym. This suggests that, while social networks might play some role in shaping fitness trends and inspiring individuals, it is not a primary driver for most women when it comes to their gym routines. The minimal impact of social networks as a motivator implies that women are more focused on intrinsic benefits of exercise, such as improving health and self-esteem, rather than seeking validation or inspiration from online platforms. This could reflect a trend where, despite the pervasive presence of fitness-related content on social networks, personal health priorities and self-improvement are more compelling drivers for gym attendance. The influence of social

networks might be more significant in setting trends or creating awareness about fitness, but it seems less critical in shaping the core motivations of women who regularly go to the gym.

4. Future research

Because this investigation was based on a limited number of interviews (10), due to time constraints, and although some repetition patterns were found, it was not possible to obtain information from all the councils of the district of Viseu. Future research could benefit from a bigger number of interviews, not only from other councils in Viseu but also from councils of all the other districts in Portugal, in order to get a national picture and better insights.

In addition, future research could evaluate the effectiveness of promotion strategies implemented by gyms, including social networks marketing campaigns. By addressing these research areas, it would be possible to gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between social networks, gym participation and health behaviours, and develop strategies to promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle in general.

The insights from this analysis highlight several areas that could benefit from further research. Understanding why women are highly influenced by social networks for dietary choices but less so for exercise programs could reveal deeper motivations and preferences. Examining how different types of fitness-related content on social networks affect behaviour and engagement might provide more precise strategies for effective marketing. Investigating the role of influencers in shaping fitness habits and preferences could further refine strategies for leveraging social networks in marketing.

Because this study focused on analysing answers from active women, further research can also analyse how non active woman perceive fitness content on social networks in relation to their exercise motivation and behaviour and evaluate the effectiveness of social networks as a tool for healthcare, as it is everchanging.

5. Final considerations

The first main goal of this research was to understand if women still prefer gymnastics over lifting weights. Based on the analysis, it appears that women's preferences have shifted away from a historic preference for gymnastics towards a stronger interest in weight training. The data shows a high percentage of women attending the weight room regularly and expressing a preference for strength training activities. This shift can be

attributed to several factors, including the growing awareness of the health, aesthetic, and mental benefits of strength training. Weight training has become a popular and mainstream choice for many women in fitness today.

The second main goal was to grasp if social networks content influences behaviours such as the practice of physical exercise, a balanced diet, and a healthy lifestyle overall. It is possible to conclude that social networks content does influence behaviours related to physical exercise, diet, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. A large number of respondents consume fitness-related content on social networks, and many have reported trying exercise programs or recipes they discovered online. Social networks serves as a source of inspiration, motivation, and information, encouraging people to adopt healthier lifestyles. Although there are both positive and negative influences from social networks, the majority of respondents, as well as interviewees, acknowledged its significant role in promoting physical activity and balanced eating habits. Social networks helps raise awareness about fitness options and healthy living, but it often complements pre-existing personal health goals rather than driving them entirely.

The third main goal of this research was to infer if the increase in female participation in gyms and clubs can be attributed to social networks. After analysing the data from different sources, it is possible to conclude that the increase in female participation in gyms and health clubs can be partially attributed to social networks. Social networks platforms have played a significant role in raising awareness about fitness, providing accessible information, and serving as a source of motivation and inspiration for many women. However, social networks is not the only factor driving this trend. Other elements, such as shifting societal attitudes towards fitness, greater awareness of the health benefits of exercise, and increased accessibility to gyms, have also contributed to the rise in female gym participation.

In conclusion, this research has shown that the increase in women going to gyms is due to both social networks and changes in society. More women now prefer weight training because they are more aware of its health benefits. Social networks helps motivate women to live healthier lives, but it also works alongside changing views of fitness and easier access to gyms. Together, these factors have influenced how women approach fitness today.

It is possible to conclude, from the analysis of this literature review, alongside the interviews and questionnaires, that the rise in female gym participation, regarding the sample of 10 gyms and 180 respondents, is the result of a combination of social networks

influence and broader societal changes, making it important to consider these factors together when analysing this trend.

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Appendixes

APPENDIX 1 - INTERVIEWS

(Portuguese version)

Esta entrevista realiza-se no âmbito da dissertação de conclusão de estudos do Mestrado em Marketing da Escola Superior de Tecnologia e Gestão do Instituto Politécnico de Viseu. O objetivo desta entrevista é perceber de que modo a pandemia afetou os ginásios do distrito de Viseu e que impacto têm as redes sociais no panorama atual dos ginásios. Pedia desde já autorização para gravar a entrevista apenas para não perder nenhuma informação importante no momento da análise das suas respostas. Todas as informações recolhidas serão apenas utilizadas para fins académicos. É importante referir que não existem respostas certas ou erradas e que todas as informações podem ser úteis para a análise.

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia?

Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia?

Os novos clientes têm um perfil demográfico (faixa etária e género) semelhante ou são diferentes?

Notou alguma alteração na participação de mulheres na prática de musculação?

Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação?

Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação?

Que influencers ou figuras fitness nas redes sociais acredita terem impacto significativo entre as mulheres que frequentam o ginásio?

Qual a sua opinião sobre o conteúdo partilhado por influencers no contexto do fitness?

Que tipo de conteúdo é partilhado nas redes sociais do seu ginásio e que impacto causa nos clientes e potenciais clientes?

Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que não frequentam o ginásio e pretendem vir a frequentar?

Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que já frequentam o ginásio? E a autoestima e motivação das mulheres?

Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers?

Que outros aspetos pensam serem retratados de forma menos realista nas redes sociais e que impacto pode ter na adesão de mulheres ao ginásio?

Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

(English version)

This interview is being carried out as part of the dissertation concluding the Master's programme in Marketing at the School of Technology and Management of the Polytechnic Institute of Viseu. The aim of this interview is to understand how the pandemic has affected gyms in the Viseu district and what impact social networks has on the current gyms landscape.

I would like to ask for your permission to record the interview so that I don't miss any important information when analysing your answers. All the information collected will only be used for academic purposes. It's important to note that there are no right or wrong answers and that all the information can be useful for analysis.

To begin with, I would ask you to describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic?

How has the number of clients evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted?

Do the new clients have a similar demographic profile (age group and gender) or are they different?

Have you noticed any change in the participation of women in bodybuilding?

Nowadays, we know the role that social networks play. Do you think that the content of social networks can influence and change behaviours related to physical exercise and diet?

Do you think that social networks has an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women's adherence to bodybuilding?

Which influencers or fitness figures on social networks do you think have a significant impact on women who go to the gym?

What is your opinion of the content shared by influencers in the context of fitness?

What kind of content is shared on your gym's social networks and what impact does it have on clients and potential clients?

How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who don't go to the gym and want to?

How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who already go to the gym? What about women's self-esteem and motivation?

How does the gym address the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers?

What other aspects do you think are portrayed less realistically on social networks and what impact might this have on women's adherence to the gym?

Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

E1 (Portuguese version)

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia?

Nuno Fonseca: É lógico que na pandemia tivemos de adotar aquelas medidas de segurança em que os treinos, ou a utilização, era feita mediante marcação prévia, com máximo de 3 ou 4 pessoas por hora. Não havia acesso aos balneários, era só mesmo frequentar o ginásio, com todas as regras de segurança. Circuitos marcados. Isso foi tudo implementado. Depois quando acabou a restrição, no início tivemos um bocadinho menos de afluência mas neste momento estamos normalizados.

Ana Almeida: Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia?

Os novos clientes têm um perfil demográfico (faixa etária e género) semelhante ou são diferentes?

Nuno Fonseca: Nós também tivemos uma situação em que só estava aberto da parte da tarde e nesse período nota-se que o maior número de utilizadores é feminino.

Ana Almeida: Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação?

Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação?

Nuno Fonseca: Sim, é sempre importante. Lá está, as redes sociais chegam a todo o lado e é importante. Principalmente nas camadas mais jovens. Nas mais elevadas já não se nota tanto a influência deste tipo de situação porque também o acesso a elas não é tão facilitado e a utilização não é tão recorrente.

Ana Almeida: Qual a sua opinião sobre o conteúdo partilhado por influencers no contexto do fitness?

Nuno Fonseca: Depende da interpretação de cada um. Temos influencers que trabalham bem e fazem o seu papel bem feito. E temos aqueles que o que lhes interessa é ganhar seguidores, e depois postam aquilo que querem, sem terem um mínimo de cuidado em perceber se terá ou não impacto positivo ou negativo nas pessoas.

Ana Almeida: Que tipo de conteúdo é partilhado nas redes sociais do seu ginásio e que impacto causa nos clientes e potenciais clientes?

Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que não frequentam o ginásio e pretendem vir a frequentar?

Nuno Fonseca: Nós temos nessa parte das redes sociais, temos a parte do gabinete de comunicação e imagem que faz esse tipo de trabalho. Que faz chegar os conteúdos das aulas que nos damos aqui, das aulas e não só. De todo o resto, aulas de grupo, aulas de fitness, treinos. E nota-se que muitas pessoas depois nos procuram porque tiveram acesso a esses conteúdos. O que é postado nas redes sociais pode ter uma influência positiva ou negativa porque depende da interpretação própria de cada pessoa. É lógico que se uma pessoa se quiser manter e vir um conteúdo numa rede social em que o objetivo específico não é manter, mas sim ganhar, pode ser uma má influência, sem dúvida nenhuma. As pessoas têm de saber o que procuram e têm que saber aquilo que estão a ver ou, nesse

caso, se tiverem alguma dúvida, procurar o técnico que lhe possa explicar essas diferenças.

Ana Almeida: Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers?

Nuno Fonseca: O importante é perceber os objetivos de cada uma com o treino de musculação. Se quer ganhar peso, se quer ganhar massa muscular, para depois se arranjar o melhor tipo de treino para que as mulheres se sintam motivadas a treinar e para que tenham os resultados que gostariam de ter. Se uma pessoa não estiver motivada, se o técnico impuser um treino ao cliente sem haver uma conversa prévia, sem haver um entendimento. Se o utente não se sente bem e não gosta do que está a fazer, mais cedo ou mais tarde vamos perder essa pessoa. O mais importante é a interligação entre técnico e utente, as ligações que se criam e o bem-estar da pessoa. Se não se sentir bem no local, não só no ginásio, quando a gente não se sente bem no local não volta. E se for um treino imposto se calhar é isso que vai acontecer. A pessoa começa a retrair-se e a não gostar e vai acabar por deixar de vir. Por isso tem de haver confiança para se criarem laços com ambas as partes. Juntando os resultados a isto.

Ana Almeida: Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

Nuno Fonseca: Não.

Ana Almeida: Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

E1 (English version)

To begin with, I'd ask you to describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic?

Nuno Fonseca: It's logical that during the pandemic we had to adopt those safety measures in which training, or use, was done by prior appointment, with a maximum of 3 or 4 people per hour. There was no access to the changing rooms, it was just going to the gym,

with all the safety rules. Marked circuits. That was all implemented. Then when the restriction ended, at first we had a little less affluence, but now we're back to normal.

Ana Almeida: How has the number of customers evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted? Do the new customers have a similar demographic profile (age group and gender) or are they different?

Nuno Fonseca: We also had a situation where it was only open in the afternoon and during that period you can see that the largest number of users are female.

Ana Almeida: Nowadays, we know the role that social networks play. Do you think that the content of social networks can influence and change behaviours related to physical exercise and diet? Do you think that social networks has an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women's adherence to bodybuilding?

Nuno Fonseca: Yes, it's always important. I mean, social networks reaches everywhere and it's important. Especially among the younger generation. At a higher level, you don't perceive the influence of this type of situation as much because access to them isn't as easy and use isn't as recurrent.

Ana Almeida: What's your opinion on the content shared by influencers in the context of fitness?

Nuno Fonseca: It depends on each person's interpretation. We have influencers who work well and do their job well. And we have those who are interested in gaining followers and then post whatever they want, without taking the slightest care to realise whether or not it will have a positive or negative impact on people.

Ana Almeida: What kind of content do you share on your gym's social networks and what impact does it have on clients and potential clients? How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who don't go to the gym and want to?

Nuno Fonseca: We have a social networks department, a communications and image department that does this kind of work. They send out the content of the classes we give

here, the classes and more. Everything else, group classes, fitness classes, training sessions. And it's noticeable that many people then come to us because they've had access to this content. What is posted on social networks can have a positive or negative influence because it depends on each person's own interpretation. It's logical that if a person wants to maintain themselves and sees content on a social networks where the specific objective is not to maintain, but to gain, it can be a bad influence, without a doubt. People have to know what they're looking for and they have to know what they're looking at or, if they have any doubts, go to a technician who can explain these differences to them.

Ana Almeida: How does the gym address the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers?

Nuno Fonseca: The important thing is to understand each person's goals with weight training. If you want to gain weight, if you want to gain muscle mass, then you can find the best type of training so that women feel motivated to train and have the results they would like to have. If a person isn't motivated, if the coach imposes a workout on the client without a prior conversation, without an understanding. If the user doesn't feel good and doesn't like what they're doing, sooner or later we're going to lose that person. The most important thing is the interconnection between coach and user, the bonds that are created and the person's well-being. If you don't feel comfortable there, not just in the gym, when you don't feel comfortable there you don't come back. And if it's an imposed workout, that's probably what will happen. You start to withdraw and dislike it, and you'll stop coming. That's why there has to be trust to create bonds with both parties. Add to that the results.

Ana Almeida: Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

Nuno Fonseca: No.

Ana Almeida: Thank you very much for your co-operation.

E2 (Portuguese version)

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia?

David Pereira: Durante o período da pandemia não era eu que estava cá, mas tenho feedback. Nessa altura eu estava em França, mas estava ligado a isto porque o presidente que abriu a sala é meu amigo. Sei que durante a pandemia foi uma fase muito complicada aqui. O ginásio teve de fechar e aquilo que fizeram foi treino online. A rede social, mais a parte informática, foi muito usada porque criaram muitas palestras, relacionadas com a alimentação, com o treinar em casa, com motivação. Havia sempre um tema. Se não me engano era uma por semana. Com oradores que estavam em casa. Psicólogos e enfermeiros. Depois começaram a criar um serviço de treino em casa com vídeos. Houve treinos com uma aplicação que continuamos a usar para lançar planos de treino. E foi assim que o ginásio consegui ter alguma fonte de rendimento e manter as pessoas ativas e ligadas ao ginásio, através dos treinos online. Também houve aulas de grupo online de zumba. Nessa altura estava em França e ainda participei em algumas. Na altura foi o que se pode fazer. Para reabrir houve muita apreensão das pessoas a voltar a estar em sociedade e em haver contacto. A pouco e pouco as pessoas começaram a ganhar confiança. As normas foram todas seguidas. Algumas marcações ainda estão aí. E também os desinfetantes alcoólicos. Houve na altura um grande cuidado e as pessoas aos poucos voltaram ao normal.

Ana Almeida: Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia?

David Pereira: Em relação ao número de clientes, eu tenho acesso aos dados de 2022, 2023 e agora 2024. Desde que entrei em setembro aumentei cerca de 70 pessoas. Tem sido sempre a crescer e a bater recordes. O que se notava muito antes é que havia o pico de abril e maio que é a operação bikini. Janeiro que é o Ano Novo, vida nova. E depois havia quedas em agosto e setembro, por causa das férias e do investimento das pessoas no regresso às aulas nos materiais. Há pessoas que infelizmente cortam no ginásio. E também nas festas. O que não aconteceu este ano. Tentei algumas campanhas para fidelizar as pessoas e tem corrido bem. Houve uma ligeira queda em dezembro, mas nada de extraordinário. E em janeiro outra vez um boom, e temos sempre pessoas novas a entrar todos os meses. Tem corrido bem. Neste momento temos cerca de 250 pessoas

inscritas, que é um número muito bom para este meio pequeno. Temos vindo a crescer e as redes sociais têm ajudado a isso. As redes sociais e o feedback das pessoas tem contribuído. Num meio pequeno como o nosso, o boca a orelha conta muito. E a rede social vem confirmar o que as pessoas falam.

Ana Almeida: Notou alguma alteração na participação de mulheres na prática de musculação?

David Pereira: Eu tenho muita mulher aqui, muitas mesmo. Raparigas mais novas, adolescentes, mulheres jovens e também pessoas de idade. Eu diria que não 50/50 mas não deve estar longe. Temos mais homens, mas devemos andar nos 55/45. Mas há muita mulher aqui. Muita mulher com cuidado seja estético, seja de saúde. Temos muita gente pela saúde. É porque é os diabetes, o colesterol, as dores de costas. Temos muita gente que trabalha a postura. E é sobretudo isso. Muitas vêm por influência de amigas. Sobretudo é pela perda de peso e trabalho postural.

Ana Almeida: Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação?

Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação?

Que tipo de conteúdo é partilhado nas redes sociais do seu ginásio e que impacto causa nos clientes e potenciais clientes?

David Pereira: Nós aqui estamos num meio pequeno e por isso não conseguimos ter uma grande expressão ou um grande impacto. Desde setembro foi um ponto que eu quis trabalhar. Estar presente na rede social. A minha irmã, que é técnica de desporto, tem feito muita divulgação nas nossas redes sociais. Temos tentado dinamizar. Fechamos várias parcerias e fizemos essa divulgação e publicitação nas nossas redes. E isso também tem ajudado muito a uma troca e partilha nas redes sociais. Nós tentamos estar presentes para que falem de nós. Também estabelecemos protocolos com o comércio local para dar descontos aos nossos sócios. E muitas vezes as pessoas estão ligados a esses comércios, e ao saber dessas parcerias também ficam a conhecer o nosso serviço. E o contrário também acontece. Também tentamos criar dias específicos. Rubricas. Frase motivacional,

dica alimentar, celebrações de por exemplo o Dia da Mulher, dia do vinho do Porto, Dia dos Namorados. Coisas desse género para que as pessoas falem e partilhem. Também tentamos partilhar sempre que alguém nos identifica nas redes sociais. E há um impacto positivo pelo facto das pessoas falarem. E acho que acaba por trazer mais gente, eu acho que sim. Nós fazemos desafios, campanhas. Tudo para trazer mais pessoas. As pessoas falam de nós, estamos na boca do povo e isso funciona.

Ana Almeida: Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que já frequentam o ginásio? E a autoestima e motivação das mulheres?

Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers?

Que outros aspetos pensam serem retratados de forma menos realista nas redes sociais e que impacto pode ter na adesão de mulheres ao ginásio?

David Pereira: Eu costumo dizer que as pessoas já começam tarde. As mulheres têm muitas mudanças no corpo logo na adolescência e deviam começar nessa altura. Por exemplo, o desenvolvimento do peito cria um peso no corpo que a mulher não está habituada. E o que acontece é que não têm logo esse cuidado em fazer reforço de postura. Reforço de peito, abdominal, costas. Se tivermos uma musculatura mais forte, vamos estar mais direitos e vai ajudar muito nessa mudança física e morfológica específica das mulheres. E depois estar no ginásio também cria uma relação importante a nível social. E isso também ajuda à parte mais psicológica. Portanto às vezes, a parte mental até acaba por ser mais trabalhada em alguns treinos do que a parte física. E isso também é importante. Nós acabamos por ser aqui um ponto de encontro. E tudo isso é essencial para a saúde, não só das mulheres, mas de toda a comunidade. E criamos uma base para diminuir o impacto da idade. A força e a resistência proporcionam uma maior qualidade de vida.

Ana Almeida: Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

David Pereira: Não.

Ana Almeida: Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

E2 (English version)

To begin with, I would ask you to describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic?

David Pereira: I wasn't here during the pandemic, but I have feedback. I was in France at the time, but I was connected to this because the president who opened the room is a friend of mine. I know that during the pandemic it was a very complicated time here. The gym had to close and what they did was online training. Social networks, plus the computer part, was used a lot because they created lots of talks, related to diet, training at home, motivation. There was always a theme. If I'm not mistaken, it was one a week. With speakers who were at home. Psychologists and nurses. Then they started creating a home training service with videos. There were trainings with an app that we still use to launch training plans. And that's how the gym was able to have some source of income and keep people active and connected to the gym, through online training. There were also online Zumba group classes. I was in France at the time and took part in a few. At the time, it was the best we could do. When it reopened there was a lot of apprehension about people getting back together and making contact. Little by little, people began to gain confidence. All the rules were followed. Some markings are still there. And also the alcoholic disinfectants. At the time, great care was taken and people gradually got back to normal.

Ana Almeida: How has the number of customers evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted?

David Pereira: Regarding the number of clients, I have access to data from 2022, 2023 and now 2024. Since I joined in September, I've increased by around 70 people. It's always been growing and breaking records. What was very noticeable before was that there was a peak in April and May, which is the bikini operation. January is the New Year, new life. And then there were drops in August and September, because of the holidays and people's back-to-school investment in materials. There are people who unfortunately cut back on the gym. And also at parties. That didn't happen this year. I've tried a few campaigns to build people's loyalty and it's been going well. There was a slight drop in December, but

nothing extraordinary. And in January there was a boom again, and we always have new people coming in every month. It's been going well. At the moment we have around 250 people signed up, which is a very good number for this small organisation. We've been growing and social networks has helped. Social networks and people's feedback have helped. In a small medium like ours, word of mouth counts for a lot. And social networks confirms what people are saying.

Ana Almeida: Have you noticed any change in the participation of women in bodybuilding?

David Pereira: I have a lot of women here, a lot. Younger girls, teenagers, young women and older people too. I'd say it's not 50/50 but it's probably not far off. We have more men, but we're probably around 55/45. But there are a lot of women here. A lot of women with aesthetic or health concerns. We have a lot of health-conscious people. Because it's diabetes, cholesterol, back pain. We have a lot of people who work on their posture. And that's mainly it. Many come because of the influence of friends. It's mainly for weight loss and postural work.

Ana Almeida: Nowadays, we know the role that social networks play. Do you think that the content of social networks can influence and change behaviours related to physical exercise and diet? Do you think that social networks has an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women's adherence to bodybuilding? What kind of content is shared on your gym's social networks and what impact does it have on clients and potential clients?

David Pereira: We're in a small environment here, so we haven't managed to make a big impression or a big impact. Since September this has been something I've wanted to work on. Being present on social networks. My sister, who is a sports coach, has been doing a lot of publicising on our social networks. We've been trying to energise them. We've signed several partnerships and we've publicised them on our networks. And this has also helped a lot in terms of exchange and sharing on social networks. We try to be present so that people talk about us. We've also established protocols with local businesses to give our members discounts. And often people are connected to these businesses, and when they find out about these partnerships they also find out about our service. And the other

way round too. We also try to create specific days. Items. Motivational phrases, food tips, celebrations such as Women's Day, Port Wine Day, Valentine's Day. Things like that to get people talking and sharing. We also try to share whenever someone identifies us on social networks. And there's a positive impact because people are talking. And I think it ends up bringing in more people, I think so. We do challenges, campaigns. Anything to bring in more people. People talk about us, we're on people's lips and that works.

Ana Almeida: How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who already go to the gym? What about women's self-esteem and motivation? How does the gym address the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers? What other aspects do you think are portrayed less realistically on social networks and what impact might this have on women's adherence to the gym?

David Pereira: I often say that people start late. Women experience a lot of changes in their bodies right from adolescence and they should start then. For example, the development of the breast creates a weight on the body that women aren't used to. And what happens is that they don't take care to strengthen their posture straight away. Strengthening the chest, abdominals and back. If we have stronger muscles, we'll be straighter and it will help a lot with this specific physical and morphological change in women. And then being in the gym also creates an important relationship on a social level. And it also helps with the psychological part. So sometimes the mental part even ends up being worked on more in some training sessions than the physical part. And that's important too. We end up being a meeting point here. And all this is essential for the health, not just of the women, but of the whole community. And we create a basis for reducing the impact of age. Strength and endurance provide a better quality of life.

Ana Almeida: Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

David Pereira: No.

Ana Almeida: Thank you very much for your co-operation.

E3 (Portuguese version)

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia?

André Santiago: Eu já trabalho em ginásio há 16 anos e a pandemia foi um desafio sem precedentes, como deve calcular, foi verdadeiramente desafiante. Como é que nós ultrapassamos isso? Antes de mais este espaço, o Fitness Factory, abriu em pandemia. Ou seja, abriu em setembro de 2020. Naquele período pós-pandemia, na primeira fase de confinamento. Foi uma oportunidade de reconversão para esta marca. Ou seja, a pandemia até foi benéfica para essa reconversão. Eu não fazia parte do projeto, fui convidado pelo diretor do clube para fazer parte do projeto na altura. Entretanto estava a trabalhar noutro ginásio e em investigação. Mas muito sucintamente, aquilo que foi a nossa dificuldade, o ter de fechar portas depois de termos aberto. Na segunda fase do confinamento, ou seja, nós fechamos em janeiro, a 15 de janeiro de 2021, foi na segunda fase que tivemos de fechar, até 5 de abril de 2021. Ou seja, foram meses de desafio. E como é que funcionou? Nós somos um clube que está ligado a uma rede, a Fitness Factory nacional, que nos dá suporte a todos os níveis, e que fez um trabalho incrível nessa fase. Foi criado um mapa de aulas online, para todo o país, com instrutores de todo o país, da rede, para dar resposta a todos os sócios, via Zoom.

E nós tínhamos, em termos de clube, interno, tínhamos também um mapa de aulas paralelo. Nós instrutores vínhamos ao clube, com todas as regras que estavam estabelecidas na altura e fazíamos uma transmissão de aulas síncronas. Tínhamos também aulas online, conteúdos online que nós produzíamos para depois disponibilizar aos clientes. Mas o nosso grande foco eram os pontos de contacto direto que tínhamos com os clientes. E isso nós conseguimos através das aulas síncronas, em que nós falávamos diretamente com os clientes, e perguntávamos as dificuldades. Isto foi uma das formas de nós podermos manter o contacto. Demos oportunidade aos clientes que quisessem fazer uma suspensão ativa, que dizia respeito a uma mensalidade muito reduzida. Um custo de cerca de 10 euros por mês para que pudessem manter a inscrição no clube, de uma forma muito mais suportável para aquela época. Houve algumas pessoas que aderiram a isso. Mas a maior parte ficou connosco, porque nós disponibilizamos muito conteúdo, e ficaram a pagar a mensalidade normalmente. Fizemos email, trocas com os clientes. A marca também nos possibilitou isso, deu-nos a possibilidade de fazer essa ligação direta

através da aplicação. Nós já utilizávamos a aplicação, por isso foi muito mais fácil. Através de emails, de contactos telefónicos, tentamos perceber as dificuldades das pessoas e saber que estavam a passar pelas mesmas dificuldades que nós, em situações laborais semelhantes ou noutras áreas.

As pessoas que ficaram connosco, nós demos a oportunidade de que durante esse ano, até ao final de 2021, pudessem usufruir de serviços dentro do espaço que cobrissem o valor das mensalidades que tinham sido pagas durante o período de fecho. Houve pessoas que optaram por serviços de gestão de treino, é um acompanhamento mensal que tem um valor de 9,99. As pessoas puderam descontar o valor dessas mensalidades nesse serviço. Puderam descontar em serviço de personal trainer, nutrição, osteopatia que nós também temos, e podiam descontar uma percentagem em suplementação. As pessoas não ficaram a perder. Nós assumimos esse risco e correu muito bem. Foi um desafio, mas nós mantivemos o contacto, quisemos essa proximidade. Com toda a equipa a trabalhar, toda a equipa a colaborar. Fazíamos turnos para vir ao ginásio, para manter a distância social e cumprir com as regras emanadas nessa altura. Reabrimos em abril, no dia 5, com restrições. Foi muito complicado de gerir porque tínhamos de ter as máquinas todas separadas, não podíamos ter aulas de grupo. Foi um desafio, nos primeiros dois meses. Entretanto começaram a libertar essas restrições e aquilo fluiu e hoje em dia já nem nos lembramos disso.

Ana Almeida: Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia?

André Santiago: No nosso caso em particular é um bocadinho ingrato fazer essa análise porque nós abrimos efetivamente em pandemia, entre a primeira fase e a segunda fase da pandemia. Por isso era expectável termos um crescimento, porque nos primeiros dois a três anos há uma taxa de penetração bastante interessante nos ginásios. Portanto já estávamos a contar com essa adesão forte. No entanto, não sei se podemos confundir com as duas situações, o facto de termos aberto há pouco tempo com o facto de estarmos a reabrir pós levantamento das restrições. O que é certo é que tivemos um crescimento exponencial, um crescimento bastante interessante.

Ana Almeida: Os novos clientes têm um perfil demográfico (faixa etária e género) semelhante ou são diferentes?

André Santiago: A verdade é que, trabalho há 16 anos na área e o que tenho notado nos últimos anos, e nestes últimos dois anos, é que há uma faixa etária a frequentar diferente. Temos muitos mais jovens. Dos 16 aos 20 anos, naquele período pré universitário, a frequentar o ginásio. Que não tínhamos há uns anos atrás. Há uns anos atrás tínhamos uma classe ativa entre os 30 e os 45 anos e agora temos uma nova faixa etária, que denominamos a nível de estudos como Geração Z. E temos também as outras gerações que já eram comuns, a faixa etária ativa entre os 30 e os 45 anos e temos depois a faixa etária do reformado, estável financeiramente e que vem essencialmente nos períodos da manhã e da tarde.

Ana Almeida: Notou alguma alteração na participação de mulheres na prática de musculação?

André Santiago: Sim, tem-se notado. Depende um bocadinho do conceito que atribuímos à musculação. Para mim, todo o treino que nós fazemos é um treino de força. Ou seja, a musculação não deixa de ser um treino de força e a verdade é que é cada vez mais consensual que o treino de força está diretamente ligado a melhorias de indicadores de saúde. E as mulheres já se preocupam com isso de uma forma mais vincada. Não só na questão de fitness, ou seja, procurar o bem-estar emocional. Procurar espaços fitness para procurar aquela aula aeróbica que se fazia há uns anos atrás e procurar divertir-se um bocadinho. Já pensam efetivamente em melhorar indicadores de saúde e nesse sentido eu creio que temos notado um aumento de mulheres a fazerem treino de força na sala de exercícios. Sim, sem dúvida.

Ana Almeida: Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação?

Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação?

Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que não frequentam o ginásio e pretendem vir a frequentar?

André Santiago: Sem dúvida. Aqui é um pau de dois bicos. Eu quero acreditar que as redes sociais nos trazem clientes ao espaço. Permitem que as pessoas cheguem aos espaços e isso já é um ponto de partida. E depois obviamente o nosso trabalho enquanto técnicos especializados na área é tentar encaminhá-las a fazer um treino adequado aos seus objetivos e às suas necessidades, para manter a segurança, que muitas vezes não acontece quando vemos alguns vídeos que são partilhados nas redes sociais. Agora, o que eu quero ressaltar disso é que de facto sim, há influencers que, passam a redundância, influenciam o exercício físico e permitem que as pessoas se disponibilizem a procurar um espaço devidamente qualificado para o fazerem e isso por si só já é muito bom. Permitir que as pessoas venham. Eu quero acreditar que sim, que tem uma influência positiva. Que nos trazem pessoas novas e que essencialmente ajudem a que essas pessoas procurem um espaço que as permita fazer exercício físico e essencialmente melhorarem tudo aquilo que pretendem melhorar.

Ana Almeida: Que influencers ou figuras fitness nas redes sociais acredita terem impacto significativo entre as mulheres que frequentam o ginásio?

Qual a sua opinião sobre o conteúdo partilhado por influencers no contexto do fitness?

Que tipo de conteúdo é partilhado nas redes sociais do seu ginásio e que impacto causa nos clientes e potenciais clientes?

Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que já frequentam o ginásio? E a autoestima e motivação das mulheres?

André Santiago: Aqui existe uma influência que eu já não acho tão positiva. Porque acabam por trazer exercícios que são vistos nas redes sociais, de treino. Que querem adaptar a um espaço que pode nem sequer estar preparado para isso ou que por ser partilhado com outras pessoas tem determinadas regras. E que às vezes nessas redes sociais, vemos exercícios isolados que não estão sujeitos a regras de utilização e isso pode ser um entrave. Nomeadamente, aquilo que falei ao início que são os pontos de contacto. Ou seja, nós profissionais, que lidamos no dia a dia com os clientes e que estamos na sala de exercício, tentamos perceber e tentamos falar com os clientes e não conseguimos porque há um fechar no seu mundo, com os “phones” ligados, têm o seu plano de treino através das redes sociais e os ginásios e academias e clubes acabam por não funcionar num contexto social. Acabam por ser apenas o veículo para chegar a alguma coisa. As pessoas entram e saem sem falar para ninguém.

Ana Almeida: Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers? Que outros aspetos pensam serem retratados de forma menos realista nas redes sociais e que impacto pode ter na adesão de mulheres ao ginásio?

André Santiago: Temos de tentar quebrar essa falta de comunicação de uma forma saudável, de uma forma equilibrada. Demora tempo para ter resultados. Nós tentamos explicar isso nas avaliações físicas iniciais que são obrigatórias, feitas por um técnico para tentar perceber os objetivos. Nós tentamos explicar um pouco isso se percebermos que a pessoa que está à nossa frente tem essa ideia. Se bem que, eu acho que as pessoas sabem um bocadinho que demora o seu tempo, ainda que também saibam que existem caminhos perigosos que possam seguir para chegar mais rápido. E um dos nossos deveres é tentar alertar para isso.

Ana Almeida: Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

André Santiago: Não, penso que é tudo.

Ana Almeida: Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

André Santiago: Obrigado.

E3 (English version)

To begin with, I would ask you to describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic?

André Santiago: I've been working in gyms for 16 years and the pandemic has been an unprecedented challenge, as you can imagine. How did we get through it? First of all, this space, Fitness Factory, opened during the pandemic. In other words, it opened in September 2020. In that post-pandemic period, in the first phase of confinement. It was a reconversion opportunity for this brand. In other words, the pandemic was beneficial for

this reconversion. I wasn't part of the project, I was invited by the club director to be part of the project at the time. In the meantime, I was working in another gym and doing research. But very briefly, what was our difficulty, having to close doors after we had opened them. In the second phase of the lockdown, that is, we closed in January, on 15 January 2021, it was in the second phase that we had to close, until 5 April 2021. In other words, it was a challenging few months. And how did it work out? We are a club that is linked to a networks, the national Fitness Factory, which supports us at all levels, and which did an incredible job during this phase. An online map of classes was created, for the whole country, with instructors from all over the country, from the networks, to respond to all the members, via Zoom.

And we had, in terms of the internal club, we also had a parallel lesson map. We instructors would come to the club, with all the rules that were established at the time, and we would broadcast synchronous classes. We also had online classes, online content that we produced and then made available to clients. But our main focus was the direct points of contact we had with customers. And we achieved this through synchronous classes, where we spoke directly to customers and asked them about their difficulties. This was one of the ways we were able to keep in touch. We gave customers the opportunity to take out an active suspension, which involved a very low monthly fee. A cost of around 10 euros a month so that they could maintain their membership of the club, in a way that was much more bearable at the time. There were a few people who joined. But most of them stayed with us, because we provided a lot of content, and they paid the monthly fee as normal. We did emails, exchanges with customers. The brand also made this possible for us, it gave us the chance to make this direct connection via the app. We already used the app, so it was much easier. Through emails, telephone contacts, we tried to understand people's difficulties and find out if they were experiencing the same difficulties as us, in similar work situations or in other areas.

The people who stayed with us, we gave them the opportunity to enjoy services within the space during that year, until the end of 2021, that covered the monthly fees they had paid during the closure period. Some people opted for training management services, a monthly service that costs 9.99. People were able to deduct the value of their monthly fees from this service. They were able to discount personal trainer services, nutrition, osteopathy, which we also have, and they could discount a percentage of supplementation. People didn't lose out. We took that risk and it went very well. It was a challenge, but we kept in touch, we wanted to be close. With the whole team working, the whole team

collaborating. We took shifts to come to the gym, to maintain social distance and comply with the rules that were issued at the time. We reopened in April, on the 5th, with restrictions. It was very complicated to manage because we had to have all the machines separate, we could not have group classes. It was a challenge for the first two months. In the meantime, those restrictions began to be lifted and things flowed and nowadays we don't even remember it.

Ana Almeida: How has the number of clients evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted?

André Santiago: In our case in particular, it's a bit thankless to analyse this because we actually opened during the pandemic, between the first phase and the second phase of the pandemic. That's why we expected to see growth, because in the first two to three years there's a very interesting penetration rate in gyms. So we were already expecting this strong uptake. However, I don't know if we can confuse the two situations, the fact that we opened recently with the fact that we're reopening after the restrictions were lifted. What is certain is that we've had exponential growth, very interesting growth.

Ana Almeida: Do the new customers have a similar demographic profile (age group and gender) or are they different?

André Santiago: The truth is, I've been working in the area for 16 years and what I've noticed in recent years, and in the last two years, is that there's a different age group attending. We have a lot more young people. From 16 to 20 years old, in that pre-university period, going to the gym. Which we didn't have a few years ago. A few years ago we had a working class between the ages of 30 and 45 and now we have a new age group, which we call Generation Z. And we also have the other generations that were already common, the working age group between 30 and 45 and then we have the retired age group, who are financially stable and come essentially in the morning and afternoon.

Ana Almeida: Have you noticed any change in the participation of women in bodybuilding?

André Santiago: Yes, it's been noticeable. It depends a little on what you think of bodybuilding. For me, all the training we do is strength training. In other words, bodybuilding is still strength training and the truth is that there is growing consensus that strength training is directly linked to improvements in health indicators. And women are already more concerned about this. Not just in terms of fitness, but also in terms of emotional well-being. They go to fitness centres to find that aerobics class they used to do a few years ago and try to have a bit of fun. They're already thinking effectively about improving health indicators and in this sense I think we've noticed an increase in women doing strength training in the exercise room. Yes, definitely.

Ana Almeida: Nowadays, we know the role that social networks play. Do you think that the content of social networks can influence and change behaviours related to physical exercise and diet? Do you think that social networks has an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women's adherence to bodybuilding? How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who don't go to the gym and want to?

André Santiago: Absolutely. It's a double-edged sword here. I want to believe that social networks bring customers to the space. They allow people to get to the venues and that's already a starting point. And then obviously our job as technicians specialising in the area is to try to guide them towards training that suits their goals and needs, to maintain safety, which is often not the case when we see some videos that are shared on social networks. Now, what I want to emphasise is that yes, there are influencers who, to be redundant, influence physical exercise and allow people to make themselves available to look for a suitably qualified space to do it, and that in itself is very good. Allowing people to come. I want to believe that it does, that it has a positive influence. That they bring us new people and that they essentially help these people look for a place that allows them to exercise and essentially improve everything they want to improve.

Ana Almeida: Which influencers or fitness figures on social networks do you think have a significant impact on women who go to the gym? What is your opinion on the content shared by influencers in the context of fitness? What kind of content is shared on your gym's social networks and what impact does it have on clients and potential clients? How

do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who already go to the gym? What about women's self-esteem and motivation?

André Santiago: There's an influence here that I don't think is so positive. Because they end up bringing exercises that they've seen on social networks, training exercises. That they want to adapt to a space that may not even be prepared for it or that, because it's shared with other people, has certain rules. And sometimes on these social networks, we see isolated exercises that aren't subject to rules of use and this can be an obstacle. In particular, what I mentioned at the beginning, which is the points of contact. In other words, we professionals, who deal with clients on a day-to-day basis and who are in the exercise room, try to understand and try to talk to clients and we can't because they're closed off in their world, with their phones switched on, they have their training plan via social networks and gyms and fitness centres and clubs end up not working in a social context. They end up being just a vehicle to get to something. People come and go without speaking to anyone.

Ana Almeida: How does the gym address the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers? What other aspects do you think are portrayed less realistically on social networks and what impact could this have on women joining the gym?

André Santiago: We have to try to break down this lack of communication in a healthy, balanced way. It takes time to get results. We try to explain this in the initial physical assessments, which are compulsory, carried out by a coach to try to understand the objectives. We try to explain this a little if we realise that the person in front of us has this idea. Although, I think people know a little that it takes time, even if they also know that there are dangerous paths they can take to get there faster. And one of our duties is to try to alert people to that.

Ana Almeida: Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

André Santiago: No, I think that's all.

E4 (Portuguese version)

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia?

Bruno Oliveira: Foi muito difícil. Posso dizer que em termos de negócios, foi o setor mais afetado a nível nacional durante a pandemia. A maior parte dos negócios conseguiria vender serviços online e nos não conseguimos vender serviços online, ou poucas pessoas conseguiram vender serviços online. Aqui nos funcionamos com um serviço praticamente exclusivamente presencial e as pessoas na questão do Covid, por via do alarmismo, da situação do isolamento, ficaram com receio seja do que for. E estão piores do que estavam, muito piores. O que é que acontece nestas estruturas? Eram 1400 em 2020, neste momento são 805. Quem não conseguiu injetar capital próprio, fechou.

Ana Almeida: Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia?

Bruno Oliveira: Houve muitas estruturas que começaram com 50% do que tinham. 40% a 50%. Nós conseguimos ter alguma base sólida para retomar, mas foi muito difícil. Porque as contas estão certas, as despesas são fixas. E foi um bocadinho árduo. Neste momento, ainda estamos a retomar. Ainda não se consegui atingir os objetivos. As pessoas criaram outros hábitos, nomeadamente o trail, o ciclismo de estrada. São atividades em que nós não precisamos de estar numa interação grupal. E fugiram dos ginásios. Agora temos de criar novos hábitos. Mesmo as aulas de grupo, em alguns locais funcionam bem e noutros locais não, porque as pessoas fugiram desse tipo de interação. E não é por causa disso que nós não temos números diários elevados. As pessoas vêm fazer musculação e cardio. Agora temos de introduzir novas técnicas para recuperar aquilo que tínhamos anteriormente.

Ana Almeida: Os novos clientes têm um perfil demográfico (faixa etária e género) semelhante ou são diferentes?

Bruno Oliveira: O nosso programa permite-nos saber o que aconteceu. O que está e o que deixou de estar. Nós neste momento estamos com 52% de clientes do sexo masculino e 48% do sexo feminino.

Inicialmente após o Covid houve muito receio das aulas de grupo. Nós tínhamos que ter delineado no espaço zonas completamente afastadas umas das outras. Recordo-me perfeitamente como se fosse hoje. E as pessoas com muito medo começaram a ter as aulas de grupo. Mais mulheres do que homens. Os homens fugiram todos para o ciclismo e para os trails. Por exemplo, as nossas aulas de cycling, neste momento para mim não estão a funcionar da maneira que eu queria. Antes quem fazia ciclismo de estrada, fazia também ciclismo indoor e fugiu tudo para outras atividades. Houve algum crescimento quando começaram a descartar as medidas do Covid. Sempre mais senhoras do que homens e depois começou a ficar equivalente. E neste momento está quase ela por ela. Tanto nas aulas de grupo como na musculação e no cardio.

Ana Almeida: Notou alguma alteração na participação de mulheres na prática de musculação?

Bruno Oliveira: Havia muitas pessoas que só faziam aulas de grupo e agora fazem só musculação e cardio. Mas não consigo encontrar explicação para esse fenómeno.

Ana Almeida: Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação?

Bruno Oliveira: Completamente. Completamente. Sou eu que faço a gestão das redes sociais e a parte do Marketing. E eu sou muito cirúrgico em termos de objetivos e daquilo que quero em termos de campanhas e de puxar os clientes para cá. E funciona muito bem. Eu vou dar um exemplo. No início, há 6 anos, quando começamos, imprimimos 10 mil flyers. Eu ainda tenho flyers! As pessoas não querem flyers. Querem publicidades no Instagram, Meta Business. E as publicidades hoje são mais direcionadas para aquilo que a gente quer.

Ana Almeida: Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação?

Bruno Oliveira: Completamente. O que é que acontece? E de maneira, posso dizer, errada. Nós somos um bichinho de hábitos e um bichinho de consumismo. Seja em termos de coisas que vemos e vamos imitar. Neste caso é o que acontece na musculação, mas às vezes vamos imitar o errado.

Ana Almeida: Qual a sua opinião sobre o conteúdo partilhado por influencers no contexto do fitness?

Bruno Oliveira: Hoje em dia muitos influencers partilham conteúdo desadequado. As pessoas não têm noção das coisas, querem resultados rápidos, motivados por aquilo que vêm nas redes sociais. Eu desde início que explico como trabalhamos aqui, para não dizerem passado algum tempo que não era nada disto que queriam.

Ana Almeida: Que tipo de conteúdo é partilhado nas redes sociais do seu ginásio e que impacto causa nos clientes e potenciais clientes?

Bruno Oliveira: Desde o início que eu percebi que as pessoas têm uma necessidade de motivação constante. E nós conseguimos motivar o cliente através de chavões e se for diariamente feito um trabalho nesse sentido, é inevitável o sucesso. Ser constante e continuar o trabalho independentemente das fases positivas ou negativas.

Ana Almeida: Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que não frequentam o ginásio e pretendem vir a frequentar?

Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que já frequentam o ginásio? E a autoestima e motivação das mulheres?

Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers?

Que outros aspetos pensam serem retratados de forma menos realista nas redes sociais e que impacto pode ter na adesão de mulheres ao ginásio?

Bruno Oliveira: O que é que acontece no mundo do fitness, que toda a gente sabe, mas ninguém fala? Há muito consumo de drogas. Esteroides anabolizantes, metabolizantes, aceleradores de criação de massa magra. Nós não trabalhamos assim, mas é isso que os

miúdos consomem atualmente. “Eh pá, eu quero ficar como aquele!”. Aquilo que eu vejo que eu quero atingir, às vezes é inatingível na metodologia que eu estou a utilizar. Cada um utiliza a metodologia que é. Há espaços que consomem e incentivam nesse sentido, há outros espaços que trabalham de maneira concertada com moléculas que não são proibidas. A creatina, para a criação de massa magra, a whey protein que também é de venda livre e não é proibida. Nós temos diversos mecanismos para auxiliar o treino e construir massa magra. Demora é muito mais tempo. Cada um trabalha como quer.

Ana Almeida: Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

Bruno Oliveira: Não, é tudo.

Ana Almeida: Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

E4 (English version)

To begin with, I would ask you to describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic?

Bruno Oliveira: It was very difficult. I can say that in terms of business, it was the most affected sector at a national level during the pandemic. Most businesses would have been able to sell services online and we weren't able to sell services online, or few people were able to sell services online. We operate here with a service that is practically exclusively face-to-face and, because of the scaremongering and the isolation situation, people were afraid of Covid. And they're worse off than they were, much worse off. What happens in these structures? There were 1,400 in 2020, now there are 805. Those who were not able to inject equity have closed down.

Ana Almeida: How has the number of clients evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted?

Bruno Oliveira: There were many structures that started with 50 per cent of what they had. 40% a 50%. We managed to have some solid ground to stand on, but it was very

difficult. Because the accounts are right, the expenses are fixed. And it was a bit of a struggle. At the moment, we're still getting back on track. We still haven't achieved the objectives. People have developed other habits, such as trail running and road cycling. These are activities in which we don't need to be in a group interaction. And they've fled the gyms. Now we have to create new habits. Even group classes, in some places they work well and in other places they don't, because people have moved away from that kind of interaction. And it's not because of this that we don't have high daily numbers. People come to do weight training and cardio. Now we have to introduce new techniques to recover what we had before.

Ana Almeida: Do the new clients have a similar demographic profile (age group and gender) or are they different?

Bruno Oliveira: There used to be a lot of people who only did group classes and now they only do weight training and cardio. But I can't find an explanation for this phenomenon.

Ana Almeida: Nowadays, we know the role that social networks play. Do you think that the content of social networks can influence and change behaviours related to physical exercise and diet?

Bruno Oliveira: Absolutely. Completely. I manage the social networks and the marketing. And I'm very surgical in terms of my objectives and what I want in terms of campaigns and bringing customers here. And it works very well. I'll give you an example. At the beginning, six years ago, when we started, we printed 10,000 flyers. I still have flyers! People don't want flyers. They want adverts on Instagram, Meta Business. And advertising today is more targeted to what we want.

Ana Almeida: Do you think that social networks have an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women taking up bodybuilding?

Bruno Oliveira: Absolutely. What happens? And in the wrong way, I might add. We're a creature of habit and a creature of consumerism. Whether in terms of things we see and imitate. In this case, that's what happens in bodybuilding, but sometimes we imitate the wrong thing.

Ana Almeida: What's your opinion on the content shared by influencers in the context of fitness?

Bruno Oliveira: Nowadays many influencers share inappropriate content. People have no concept of things, they want quick results, motivated by what they see on social networks. I explain how we work here right from the start, so they don't say after a while that it wasn't what they wanted at all.

Ana Almeida: What kind of content do you share on your gym's social networks and what impact does it have on clients and potential clients?

Bruno Oliveira: Right from the start I realised that people need constant motivation. And we manage to motivate the client through catchphrases, and if we work towards this every day, success is inevitable. Being constant and continuing to work regardless of the positive or negative phases.

Ana Almeida: How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who don't go to the gym and want to? How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who already go to the gym? What about women's self-esteem and motivation? How does the gym address the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers? What other aspects do you think are portrayed less realistically on social networks and what impact might this have on women's adherence to the gym?

Bruno Oliveira: What happens in the fitness world that everyone knows about but nobody talks about? There is a lot of drug use. Anabolic steroids, metabolisers, lean mass accelerators. We don't work like that, but that's what kids are consuming these days. 'Man, I want to look like that!'. What I see I want to achieve is sometimes unattainable in the methodology I'm using. Everyone uses their own methodology. There are places that consume and encourage this, and there are other places that work together with molecules that aren't banned. Creatine, for building lean mass, whey protein, which is also over-the-counter and not banned. We have several mechanisms to help you train and build lean mass. It takes much longer. Everyone works the way they want.

Ana Almeida: Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

Bruno Oliveira: No, that's all.

Ana Almeida: Thank you very much for your co-operation.

E5 (Portuguese version)

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia?

Joana Lajas: Este ginásio surgiu depois da pandemia. Eu trabalhava noutra ginásio que acabou por fechar por uns problemas relacionados com a renda. A Câmara queria que continuássemos a pagar a renda mesmo estando fechados e então o ginásio acabou por fechar. Da equipa da altura eu era a única que era daqui então optei por ficar cá, comecei a trabalhar sozinha, com PTS, aulas online e as coisas foram surgindo aos bocadinhos. Vamos fazer agora 3 anos em abril e estamos em constante crescimento. Comecei mesmo só com um bocadinho. Vamos crescendo, vou comprando umas coisas.

Ana Almeida: Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia?

Joana Lajas: Senti que a pandemia tirou muita gente do ginásio. Muita gente começou a treinar ao ar livre, na rua, e habituou-se de tal forma que não regressou aos ginásios. Houve outras pessoas que regressaram e sem dúvida que sinto que as pessoas estão a voltar, a regressar aos hábitos de treino. Mas sem dúvida que a pandemia levou muita gente para a rua. Que não é mau. É mau para nós enquanto negócio, mas não é mau para as pessoas.

Ana Almeida: Os novos clientes têm um perfil demográfico (faixa etária e género) semelhante ou são diferentes? Notou alguma alteração na participação de mulheres na prática de musculação?

Joana Lajas: Aqui neste ginásio o nosso público-alvo não é as mulheres, mas sem dúvida que temos mais mulheres. Mais nas aulas de grupo. Nós dizemos aos homens para fazer, há um ou outro que se atreve, mas são maioritariamente mulheres. Além das aulas de grupo, as mulheres cada vez mais fazem treino de força. E gostam porque percebem que é muito mais vantajoso para o corpo, para a estética e para a saúde. E eu costumo dizer “Se queres ser uma quarentona enxutinha, ou se queres ser uma quarentona com as peles mais caídas.” (risos). Principalmente nós mulheres, chegamos a uma idade em que começa tudo a cair. E as vezes é importante pensarmos nisso. Não só no aspeto do corpo, mas também na saúde. E devemos tomar o hábito de treino como tomamos o de lavar os dentes.

Ana Almeida: Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação?

Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação?

Que tipo de conteúdo é partilhado nas redes sociais do seu ginásio e que impacto causa nos clientes e potenciais clientes?

Joana Lajas: Muito. Sim, muito. Eu noto que em semanas que dedico mais tempo às redes sociais, as pessoas vêm mais ao ginásio. Nas semanas em que me desligo mais, as pessoas parece que custa mais a vir. Que não se lembram tanto, não há aquela chamada de atenção. Eu acho que faz muita diferença.

Ana Almeida: Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que não frequentam o ginásio e pretendem vir a frequentar?

Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que já frequentam o ginásio? E a autoestima e motivação das mulheres?

Joana Lajas: Infelizmente influencia muito. Digo infelizmente, mas há o bom e há o mau. Mas as pessoas regem-se mais pelo mau. Porque o bom custa mais, dá mais trabalho a seguir. E temos algumas pessoas que tentam ir pelo caminho mais fácil, e às vezes o mais fácil é ir pelo que alguém disse. Alguém disse que era bom e então eu vou fazer.

Ana Almeida: Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers?

Joana Lajas: Eu acho que cada vez mais há colegas, e falo porque há muitos que são colegas, formados, que apostam muito nas redes sociais. Às vezes é preciso saber escolher quem seguir. Eu própria sigo colegas e gosto do que eles partilham. Não é tudo lixo. Mas para as pessoas que não têm um conhecimento básico de treino, deixam levar-se pelo caminho mais fácil. Para quem já tem conhecimento de treino, para quem já treina há muito tempo, eu acho que é uma mais-valia. E acho que tiramos sempre ideias, tiramos sempre alguma coisa. Às vezes para sair da rotina, para experimentar alguma coisa nova. E sair da rotina às vezes também é bom, não vejo mal nenhum nisso. A rotina é importante e seguir os treinos é importante, mas se esporadicamente fizer outra coisa, não vejo mal nenhum nisso.

Ana Almeida: Que outros aspetos pensam serem retratados de forma menos realista nas redes sociais e que impacto pode ter na adesão de mulheres ao ginásio?

Joana Lajas: Depende de quem está a ver. E se a pessoa está a treinar e sabe tirar proveito daquilo. Depende um bocadinho de quem está a interpretar o conteúdo.

Ana Almeida: Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

Joana Lajas: Não.

Ana Almeida: Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

E5 (English version)

To begin with, I would ask you to describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic?

Joana Lajas: This gym came about after the pandemic. I used to work at another gym, which ended up closing due to problems with the rent. The council wanted us to keep paying the rent even though we were closed, so the gym ended up closing. Of the team at the time, I was the only one who was from here, so I chose to stay here, I started working on my own, with PTS, online classes and things came along little by little. We'll now be three years old in April and we're constantly growing. I really only started with a little bit. We're growing, I'm buying things.

Ana Almeida: How has the number of clients evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted?

Joana Lajas: I felt that the pandemic took a lot of people out of the gym. A lot of people started training outdoors, in the street, and got so used to it that they didn't go back to the gyms. Other people have returned and I definitely feel that people are coming back, returning to their training habits. But there's no doubt that the pandemic has driven a lot of people out onto the streets. That's not a bad thing. It's bad for us as a business, but it's not bad for people.

Ana Almeida: Do the new customers have a similar demographic profile (age group and gender) or are they different? Have you noticed any change in the participation of women in bodybuilding?

Joana Lajas: Here at this gym our target audience isn't women, but we definitely have more women. More in the group classes. We tell the men to do it, there are a few who dare, but it's mostly women. As well as group classes, women are increasingly doing strength training. And they like it because they understand the benefits for their bodies, their aesthetics and their health. And I often say, 'If you want to be a slim forty-year-old, or if you want to be a forty-year-old with more saggy skin.' (laughs). Especially us women, we reach an age when everything starts to fall off. And sometimes it's important to think about that. Not just about your body, but also about your health. And we should take up the habit of training like we take up the habit of brushing our teeth.

Ana Almeida: Nowadays, we know the role that social networks play. Do you think that the content of social networks can influence and change behaviours related to physical

exercise and diet? Do you think that social networks has an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women's adherence to bodybuilding? What kind of content is shared on your gym's social networks and what impact does it have on clients and potential clients?

Joana Lajas: Very much so. Yes, a lot. I notice that on weeks when I dedicate more time to social networks, people come to the gym more. On weeks when I switch off more, people seem to find it harder to come. They don't remember as much, there isn't that call for attention. I think it makes a big difference.

Ana Almeida: How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who don't go to the gym and want to? How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who already go to the gym? What about women's self-esteem and motivation?

Joana Lajas: Unfortunately it influences a lot. I say unfortunately, but there's good and there's bad. But people are more influenced by the bad. Because the good stuff costs more, it's more work to follow. And there are some people who try to take the easy way out, and sometimes the easy way is to go with what someone else has said. Someone said it was good and so I'm going to do it.

Ana Almeida: How does the gym address the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers?

Joana Lajas: I think there are more and more colleagues, and I'm talking because there are many of us who are colleagues, graduates, who are betting a lot on social networks. Sometimes you have to know who to follow. I myself follow colleagues and I like what they share. It's not all rubbish. But for people who don't have a basic knowledge of training, they take the easy way out. For those who already know about training, for those who have been training for a long time, I think it's an asset. And I think you always get ideas, you always get something out of it. Sometimes to get out of a rut, to try something new. And sometimes it's good to get out of a rut, I don't see anything wrong with that. Routine is important and following your training programmes is important, but if you do something else from time to time, I don't see anything wrong with that.

Ana Almeida: What other aspects do you think are portrayed less realistically on social networks and what impact might this have on women joining the gym?

Joana Lajas: It depends on who's watching. And whether the person is training and knows how to make the most of it. It depends a little on who is interpreting the content.

Ana Almeida: Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

Joana Lajas: No.

Ana Almeida: Thank you very much for your co-operation.

E6 (Portuguese version)

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia?

Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia?

Hélder Rodrigues: É assim, por acaso este ginásio tinha antigamente outra gerência. Eu já cá andava e já cá treinava há muito tempo. Eles na altura quiseram fechar, fechar mesmo o ginásio e foi a oportunidade que eu agarrei para abrir isto com outro tipo de conceito, com as minhas ideias. E foi no pós-pandemia. Obviamente que não é fácil. O pessoal veio com medo. Na altura falava-se que os ginásios eram um dos principais problemas de transferência de micróbios e não sei quê. E não foi fácil. Foi um risco. Mas foi um risco que se correu e rapidamente vieram as vacinas e isso ajudou o pessoal a regressar a vida normal. E agora cada vez temos mais gente. Muitos miúdos da escola. Temos muito público de miúdos jovens agora.

Ana Almeida: Notou alguma alteração na participação de mulheres na prática de musculação?

Hélder Rodrigues: Sim. As mais jovens são as que mais aderem. Algumas vêm com os namorados, com os amigos. Mas também temos muito público talvez a partir dos 27 para

cima. Muito publico feminino. E publico ainda mais velho, acima dos seus 40, também temos bastante. Mas maioritariamente é as mais jovens. Tem outro tipo de mentalidade, já querem fazer disto o seu dia-a-dia.

Ana Almeida: Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação?

Qual a sua opinião sobre o conteúdo partilhado por influencers no contexto do fitness?

Hélder Rodrigues: Sim. Tanto para o bem como para o mal. O problema acho que está aí. Há muito informação na internet boa e nas redes sociais que o pessoal segue. Mas também há muita informação má. Também há muitos treinos na internet de pessoal que se mete a inventar. Que não tem tanta eficiência como exercícios tradicionais. A variação que eles vão usar, pouco ou nada ativa. E acabam por fazer o exercício porque dizem “vi isto no Tik Tok ou no Instagram”. E o que é que eu vou dizer? Eu vou dizer “Olha, queres experimentar experimenta, mas da minha parte...”. Às vezes até pode ser bom. Mas se eu até conheço a pessoa digo “Isto não ver são tão eficiente por causa disto, disto e disto”. Da parte da alimentação. Há muita gente que segue muito aquele mito de não comer carboidratos a partir das 5 da tarde. Também há muito conteúdo bom nas redes sociais, mais no Instagram. Muito pessoal brasileiro. Paulo Muzy é fantástico. E eles são extraordinários. Há muito conteúdo bom, o pessoal é que tem de ver se isso se adapta ao seu estilo de vida.

Ana Almeida: Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação? Que tipo de conteúdo é partilhado nas redes sociais do seu ginásio e que impacto causa nos clientes e potenciais clientes?

Hélder Rodrigues: Nós por acaso temos só Instagram. Já pensei criar o BeReal mas ainda não tive oportunidade. Nem Facebook temos. Temos Instagram porque é a rede social que atualmente mais atinge pessoas. Nós tentamos sempre criar conteúdo para os nossos clientes, desde stories a reels a publicações. Motivação, está na hora de treinar. Tentamos puxar pelo cliente, partilhar as stories que eles nos identificam. Tentamos sempre manter

o Instagram ativo, para atingir o máximo de pessoas e motivarmos o máximo de pessoas que conseguirmos.

Ana Almeida: Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que não frequentam o ginásio e pretendem vir a frequentar?

Hélder Rodrigues: Nós por exemplo no ano passado fizemos um evento em conjunto com a Câmara. Demos uma aula de step e outra de circuito e nós levamos gente daqui do ginásio, mas também levamos muita gente de fora do ginásio porque o evento foi partilhado por eles no Facebook e por nós no Instagram. E isso tudo chama o pessoal a ver a este tipo de eventos. Também já tive gente que veio porque viu no Instagram de uma amiga, gente que vai ao Google que pesquisa e encontra o nosso ginásio. Já tive muita gente que vem a partir dos stories, e de publicações também.

Ana Almeida: Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers?

Hélder Rodrigues: Há pessoas que chegam aqui e não duram 2 meses. Nós temos muitos clientes que pesavam 126kgs e foram para 80. Miúdos com 60kgs que já estão nos 70. Nós temos histórias de pessoas que conseguiram tanto perder gordura como ganhar massa muscular. Os que gostam da transformação em si, começam a treinar e a ver resultados e quando chegam a um ponto ou vão embora ou acabam por mudar o objetivo e querer só manter aquilo que conseguiram. Mas a realidade é que há muito gente que quer conquistar num mês aquilo que se conquista num ano. Muita gente acaba por desistir no primeiro mês. E no primeiro mês tu não vais ver diferença nenhuma. Não vais sentir aquela transformação. Também porque não vais pegar em muitas cargas. Segundo mês já se nota. No terceiro mês é que comesças a ver as diferenças no teu corpo. E há muita gente que pensa que é rápido, chega aqui dá duas bombadas numa máquina e está feito. E não é assim que funciona. Nós temos de motivar o cliente e explicar isso.

Ana Almeida: Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que já frequentam o ginásio? E a autoestima e motivação das mulheres? Que outros aspetos pensam serem retratados de forma menos realista nas redes sociais e que impacto pode ter na adesão de mulheres ao ginásio?

Hélder Rodrigues: Eu acho que o estigma hoje em dia já não existe. A ideia de que as mulheres não querem fazer muito treino de superiores porque depois ficam demasiado largas. Eu já fui muitas vezes sincero com muitas mulheres. Se nem os que cá andam a puxar pesado têm umas grandes costas (risos). Isto não é assim que funciona. E eu explico e elas acabam por fazer os exercícios porque percebem e acabam por aderir mais ao treino de superiores. Eu acho que atualmente já não é preciso explicar isso. Mesmo nas pessoas de mais idade, acho que já não há esse estigma de chegar aqui uma rapariga e não querer a musculação.

Ana Almeida: Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

Hélder Rodrigues: Não.

Ana Almeida: Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

E6 (English version)

To begin with, I would ask you to describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic?

How has the number of clients evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted?

Hélder Rodrigues: It's just that this gym used to have a different management. I'd been here and training here for a long time. At the time, they wanted to close it down, really close it down, and that was the opportunity I took to open it with a different concept, with my own ideas. And it was in the aftermath of the pandemic. Obviously it's not easy. People came with fear. At the time there was talk that gyms were one of the main problems for transferring microbes and whatnot. And it wasn't easy. It was a risk. But it was a risk that was taken and soon the vaccines came along and that helped people return to normal life. And now we have more and more people. Lots of schoolchildren. We have a lot of young kids now.

Ana Almeida: Have you noticed any change in the participation of women in bodybuilding?

Hélder Rodrigues: Yes, the younger ones are the ones who come the most. Some come with their boyfriends, with their friends. But we also have a lot of people, perhaps from 27 upwards. A lot of women. And we also have a lot of older people, over 40. But mostly it's younger people. They have a different mentality, they want to make this their everyday life.

Ana Almeida: Nowadays, we know the role that social networks play. Do you think that social networks content can influence and change behaviours related to physical exercise and diet? What is your opinion on the content shared by influencers in the context of fitness?

Hélder Rodrigues: Yes, for better or for worse. I think that's the problem. There's a lot of good information on the internet and on social networks that people follow. But there's also a lot of bad information. There's also a lot of training on the internet by people who invent things. That aren't as effective as traditional exercises. The variation they're going to use does little or nothing to activate them. And they end up doing the exercise because they say 'I saw this on Tik Tok or Instagram'. And what am I going to say? I'm going to say 'Look, you want to try it, try it, but from me...'. Sometimes it can be good. But if I even know the person, I'll say 'This isn't as effective because of this, this and this'. The diet. A lot of people follow that myth about not eating carbohydrates after 5pm. There's also a lot of good content on social networks, more so on Instagram. A lot of Brazilian people. Paulo Muzy is fantastic. And they're extraordinary. There's a lot of good content, it's up to you to see if it suits your lifestyle.

Ana Almeida: Do you think that social networks have an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women taking up bodybuilding? What kind of content do you share on your gym's social networks and what impact does it have on clients and potential clients?

Hélder Rodrigues: We just happen to have Instagram. I've thought about creating BeReal but I haven't had the chance yet. We don't even have Facebook. We have Instagram because it's the social networks that currently reaches the most people. We always try to create content for our clients, from stories to reels to posts. Motivation, it's time to train.

We try to appeal to our clients, to share the stories that they identify with us. We always try to keep Instagram active, to reach as many people as possible and motivate as many people as we can.

Ana Almeida: How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who don't go to the gym and want to?

Hélder Rodrigues: Last year, for example, we organised an event in conjunction with the Town Hall. We gave a step class and a circuit class and we took people from the gym, but we also took a lot of people from outside the gym because the event was shared by them on Facebook and by us on Instagram. And all this attracts people to these kinds of events. I've also had people come because they saw it on a friend's Instagram, people who google and find our gym. I've had a lot of people come from the stories, and from publications too.

Ana Almeida: How does the gym deal with the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers?

Hélder Rodrigues: There are people who arrive here and don't last two months. We have a lot of clients who weighed 126kg and went to 80. Kids weighing 60kg who are now 70. We have stories of people who have managed to lose fat and gain muscle mass. Those who like the transformation itself, start training and seeing results and when they reach a point they either leave or end up changing their goal and just wanting to maintain what they've achieved. But the reality is that many people want to achieve in a month what they can achieve in a year. A lot of people end up giving up in the first month. And in the first month you won't see any difference. You won't feel that transformation. Also because you're not going to take on many loads. By the second month you can tell. In the third month you start to see the differences in your body. And a lot of people think it's quick, you get here, you pump a machine a couple of times and you're done. And that's not how it works. We have to motivate the client and explain that.

Ana Almeida: How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who already go to the gym? What about women's self-esteem and motivation? What other aspects do you think are portrayed less realistically on social networks and what impact can it have on women's adherence to the gym?

Hélder Rodrigues: I think the stigma no longer exists today. The idea that women don't want to do a lot of upper body training because then they get too wide. I've often been honest with many women. If even the guys who pull heavy here don't have a big back (laughs). That's not how it works. And I explain it to them and they end up doing the exercises because they understand and end up sticking more to upper body training. I don't think it's necessary to explain this nowadays. Even with older people, I don't think there's that stigma of a girl coming in here and not wanting to do weight training.

Ana Almeida: Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

Hélder Rodrigues: No.

Ana Almeida: Thank you very much for your co-operation.

E7 (Portuguese version)

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia?

Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia?

Sandrina Aguiar: Durante a pandemia nós apostamos muito no online. Criamos muitos vídeos que partilhamos com os nossos clientes para poderem treinar em casa. Também tivemos aulas online que as pessoas podiam assistir em direto ou depois quando tivessem disponibilidade. Houve também algumas pessoas que alugaram materiais para treinar em casa e, portanto, quisemos manter as pessoas ativas mesmo com todos os entraves das medidas de restrição e de segurança que foram impostas na altura.

Inicialmente, quando reabrimos após a pandemia tivemos alguma dificuldade. Houve muita gente a cancelar o ginásio. Passado um mês e meio mais ou menos começou toda a gente a voltar. E depois notamos também que houve muita gente a inscrever-se que começou a fazer exercício em casa durante a pandemia, exercício online, e tiveram essa necessidade de fazer em ginásio.

Ana Almeida: Notou alguma alteração na participação de mulheres na prática de musculação?

Sandrina Aguiar: Sim, temos cada vez mais mulheres a treinar musculação, que antes não se notava tanto. Estamos a crescer bastante a nível de mulheres. Neste momento posso dizer que os nossos clientes são cerca de metade/metade.

Ana Almeida: Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação?

Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação?

Sandrina Aguiar: Sim, acho que sim e é muito importante. As pessoas têm visto muitos vídeos nas redes sociais e acabam por querer ter aquele corpo que veem. E procuram os ginásios para conseguir alcançar esses objetivos. E começam a entender que a parte da musculação tem muitos mais benefícios, e conseguem atingir melhores resultados do que nas aulas de grupo, que eram mais procuradas noutros tempos.

Ana Almeida: Que tipo de conteúdo é partilhado nas redes sociais do seu ginásio e que impacto causa nos clientes e potenciais clientes?

Sandrina Aguiar: Nós tentamos partilhar conteúdo motivacional, mas também não ser o típico ginásio que só mostra corpos definidos e que toda a gente que treina tem de ficar assim. Temos pessoas de todas as idades e vários tipos de corpos e também tentamos motivar esse tipo de pessoas com conteúdos adaptados. Achamos que dessa forma conseguimos chegar a mais pessoas e de uma maneira mais real.

Ana Almeida: Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que não frequentam o ginásio e pretendem vir a frequentar?

Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que já frequentam o ginásio? E a autoestima e motivação das mulheres?

Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers?

Sandrina Aguiar: As pessoas tentam fazer os treinos do corpo que veem, porque acham que vão ficar assim, conforme veem a pessoa a fazer. E o treino não está adaptado para esse tipo de pessoas. As pessoas têm de começar por um tipo de treino inicial para depois começaram a fazer esse tipo de treino, porque têm diferentes objetivos. E as pessoas querem começar logo a fazer os treinos que veem nas redes sociais. Porque é aquele exercício que lhes vai proporcionar aquilo. E não percebem que todo o treino em si tem de ter um objetivo inicial, e tem de haver uma transformação, e não podem ser só fazer aqueles movimentos como veem nas redes sociais.

Ana Almeida: Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

Sandrina Aguiar: Sim. O que eu costumo dizer as pessoas é que primeiro o que elas vêm fazer tem de ir encontro àquilo que elas gostam de fazer. Se as mulheres não se identificarem com a musculação não lhes vou dizer que só deviam fazer isso. Porque há pessoas que gostam só das aulas de grupo. E não estou a dizer que não obtenham resultados só nas aulas de grupo, mas se calhar os resultados aparecem mais lentamente. Claro que lhes explico que quando estão a fazer um treino de musculação, é um treino mais específico, e, portanto, é muito mais fácil atingir determinado objetivo. É que isso que eu lhes tento fazer ver. E como o treino de força é o que ajuda a obter mais resultados, porque nas aulas de grupo não conseguem fazer aumentos de carga, eu tento explicar por aí que é mais benéfico nesse sentido.

Ana Almeida: Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

E7 (English version)

To begin with, I would ask you to describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic?

How has the number of clients evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted?

Sandrina Aguiar: During the pandemic we bet a lot on online. We created a lot of videos that we shared with our clients so they could train at home. We also had online classes that people could watch live or later when they were available. There were also some people who rented materials to train at home, so we wanted to keep people active even with all the obstacles of the restriction and security measures that were imposed at the time.

Initially, when we reopened after the pandemic, we had some difficulty. A lot of people cancelled the gym. After a month and a half or so, everyone started coming back. And then we also noticed that there were a lot of people signing up who started exercising at home during the pandemic, exercising online, and they had this need to do it in the gym.

Ana Almeida: Have you noticed any change in the participation of women in bodybuilding?

Sandrina Aguiar: Yes, we're seeing more and more women training in bodybuilding, which used to be less noticeable. We're growing a lot in terms of women. At the moment I can say that our clients are about half and half.

Ana Almeida: Nowadays, we know the role that social networks play. Do you think that the content of social networks can influence and change behaviours related to physical exercise and diet? Do you think that social networks has an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women's adherence to bodybuilding?

Sandrina Aguiar: Yes, I think so and it's very important. People have seen a lot of videos on social networks and end up wanting to have the body they see. And they go to gyms to achieve those goals. And they're beginning to realise that bodybuilding has many more benefits, and they can achieve better results than in group classes, which were more popular in the past.

Ana Almeida: What kind of content do you share on your gym's social networks and what impact does it have on clients and potential clients?

Sandrina Aguiar: We try to share motivational content, but also not be the typical gym that only shows defined bodies and that everyone who trains has to look like that. We

have people of all ages and various body types and we also try to motivate these types of people with adapted content. We think that this way we can reach more people and in a more real way.

Ana Almeida: How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who don't go to the gym and want to? How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who already go to the gym? What about women's self-esteem and motivation? How does the gym address the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers?

Sandrina Aguiar: People try to train the body they see, because they think they're going to look like that, as they see the person doing it. And training isn't adapted to that type of person. People have to start with one type of training and then start doing that type of training, because they have different goals. And people want to start doing the workouts they see on social networks straight away. Because that's the exercise that's going to get them there. And they don't realise that all the training itself has to have an initial goal, and there has to be a transformation, and it can't just be doing those movements that they see on social networks.

Ana Almeida: Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

Sandrina Aguiar: Yes, what I usually tell people is that first of all what they come to do has to be in line with what they like to do. If women don't identify with bodybuilding, I'm not going to tell them that's all they should do. Because there are people who only like group classes. And I'm not saying that they don't get results only in group classes, but maybe the results come more slowly. Of course, I explain to them that when they're doing weight training, it's more specific, and therefore it's much easier to achieve a certain goal. That's what I try to make them see. And since strength training is what helps them get the most results, because in group classes they can't increase the load, I try to explain that it's more beneficial in that sense.

Ana Almeida: Thank you very much for your co-operation.

E8 (Portuguese version)

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia? Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia?

Nuno Lopes: Eu abri em 2018, numa fase pré pandemia em que o crescimento foi bastante, não foi um crescimento muito agressivo, mas foi progredindo ao longo dos meses. Eu abri em abril e no final do inverno já tinha dobrado o número de clientes. Depois entrou 2019, continuamos a crescer. Também é um sítio com pouca população, é um meio mais pequeno e com uma comunidade reservada no que diz respeito a esta área do fitness, mas mesmo assim foi havendo uma evolução na inscrição de clientes. Entretanto, com a pandemia em 2020, como qualquer ginásio, tivemos alguns meses fechados e quando voltamos a abrir foi um descalabro. Baixas acima dos 80%, as pessoas que eu tinha cá a treinar e voltaram, foram aquelas que já estavam habituadas há mais tempo a treinar. Aquelas pessoas que estavam a iniciar e a tentar perceber o que era um ginásio, isso acabou por desistir tudo numa fase inicial da reabertura. Nesta terra, ao início notei muito essa diferença. As pessoas que vinham treinar era por curiosidade e não porque sabiam o que vinham fazer. Esse público foi todo embora. Na segunda vez que abrimos senti que houve um boom esporádico de pessoas a querer vir treinar. Tive um crescimento muito grande nos primeiros meses após a pandemia, independentemente das restrições que havia para treinar. Senti um boom muito grande e neste momento consigo ter números bem acima daqueles que tinha antes da pandemia e a crescer. Sempre de forma lenta, mas sempre a crescer.

Ana Almeida: Os novos clientes têm um perfil demográfico (faixa etária e género) semelhante ou são diferentes?

Notou alguma alteração na participação de mulheres na prática de musculação?

Nuno Lopes: Aqui neste ginásio, o meu publico sempre teve mais mulheres do que homens. Não sei se tem a ver com a visão do que é o ginásio, do que o ginásio representa. Mas sempre tive mais mulheres do que homens a treinar. Na ordem do 60/40. Mas sim, continua a haver muito mais interesse por parte das mulheres a vir treinar. Algumas delas desistem, a maior parte que começa tem sempre preocupações de vergonha, que ainda

acontece nesta vila. Mas a taxa de retenção é bastante alta, nas mulheres. Enquanto que os homens tenho muitos na faixa etária dos 30/40 e muitos miúdos de secundário. Nas mulheres tenho de todas as faixas etárias. Desde o secundário até mulheres mais idosas.

Ana Almeida: Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação? Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação?

Nuno Lopes: Eu acredito que sim. É um trabalho que infelizmente no meu ginásio não faço muito. Mas sei que é uma coisa que está e que é bastante importante, seja na divulgação de hábitos saudáveis, seja na informação, seja na doutrina. Eu acho que sim, acho que as redes sociais fazem toda a diferença. Ainda para mais com o trabalho que os influencers fizeram no período da pandemia e pós pandemia.

Ana Almeida: Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que não frequentam o ginásio e pretendem vir a frequentar?
Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que já frequentam o ginásio? E a autoestima e motivação das mulheres?

Nuno Lopes: Uma das coisas que eu tenho percebido ao longo dos 6 anos que eu estou cá. Numa fase inicial, quando abri o ginásio, a maneira como as pessoas se comportavam era diferente de agora. Eu noto muito que o estilo de treino que as pessoas têm deve-se muito àquilo que está nas redes sociais. Seja exercícios, formas de treino, mesmo na alimentação. Noto que existe essa influência direta por parte das redes sociais, sem dúvida. Por um lado, o conteúdo influencia de forma positiva. A ter uma vida mais ativa, mais saudável. Para mim já é um ganho substancial relativamente ao que era no passado. Por outro lado, em questões de treino e de alimentação, existem situações que não são tão positivas a meu ver. Existe muita informação, e é normal que as pessoas não tenham capacidade de tentar decifrar o que é bom e o que não é bom. Eu sinto que a maior parte das pessoas, e clientes que eu tenho, fazem tudo por imitação, embora não percebam muito bem o que estão a fazer.

Ana Almeida: Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers? Que outros aspetos pensam serem retratados de forma menos realista nas redes sociais e que impacto pode ter na adesão de mulheres ao ginásio?

Nuno Lopes: Eu acho que o impacto tem sido positivo. O marketing em si, e os influencers que nós vemos como se fosse um amigo nosso, acaba por facilitar tornar os nossos hábitos mais saudáveis. Há sempre a questão preocupante de um influencer ser anabolizado e nos tentarmos chegar aquele ponto que nunca vai acontecer na vida. E acho que o papel do técnico de exercício físico é mostrar as pessoas que essa não é essa a forma mais correta. Treinar sim, alimentar-se bem sim, mas numa forma mais credível e mais normal dentro daquilo que é o nosso dia a dia.

Eu de forma ativa, e alguns colegas meus, nós de forma ativa tentamos desviar desse contexto. Qualquer pessoa que venha cá, que tenha pouca experiência, ou nenhuma experiência, que veja nas redes sociais alguma coisa de um influencer ou até de um atleta, nota-se que os objetivos acabam por ser um bocadinho desfigurados daquilo que é a realidade e do que nós somos. Um treino que um fisiculturista brasileiro faz, que toma esteroides anabolizantes, não tem os mesmos hábitos de alguém que anda aqui no ginásio. Eu acredito, tanto eu como os meus colegas, que o nosso papel é abrir os olhos às pessoas e tentar ensiná-las que não é assim que se faz. E quando se faz, tem de ser nos termos em que nós vivemos e da maneira que nós somos. É um bocado esse o nosso papel hoje em dia.

Ana Almeida: Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

Nuno Lopes: Não.

Ana Almeida: Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

E8 (English version)

To begin with, I would ask you to describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic? How has the number of clients evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted?

Nuno Lopes: I opened in 2018, in a pre-pandemic phase in which there was a lot of growth, not very aggressive growth, but it progressed over the months. I opened in April and by the end of the winter I had doubled the number of clients. Then 2019 came and we continued to grow. It's also a place with a small population, it's a smaller environment and with a reserved community when it comes to this area of fitness, but even so there has been an evolution in customer enrolment. However, with the pandemic in 2020, like any gym, we were closed for a few months and when we opened again it was a disaster. Drops of over 80 per cent, the people I had training here and who came back were those who had been training for longer. The people who were just starting out and trying to understand what a gym was all about gave up in the early stages of the reopening. In this town, I really noticed that difference at first. The people who came to train were out of curiosity and not because they knew what they were doing. That crowd all left. The second time we opened I felt that there was a sporadic boom of people wanting to come and train. There was a huge growth in the first few months after the pandemic, regardless of the restrictions on training. I felt a very big boom and at the moment I have numbers well above those I had before the pandemic and growing. Always slowly, but always growing.

Ana Almeida: Do the new clients have a similar demographic profile (age group and gender) or are they different? Have you noticed any change in the participation of women in bodybuilding?

Nuno Lopes: Here at this gym, my audience has always been more women than men. I don't know if it has to do with the vision of what the gym is, what the gym represents. But I've always had more women than men training. Around 60/40. But yes, there's still a lot more interest from women to come and train. Some of them give up, most of those who start always worry about shame, which still happens in this village. But the retention rate is quite high among women. While I have a lot of men in their 30s and 40s and a lot of high school kids. I have women from all age groups. From secondary school to older women.

Ana Almeida: Nowadays, we know the role that social networks play. Do you think that the content of social networks can influence and change behaviours related to physical exercise and diet? Do you think that social networks has an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women's adherence to bodybuilding?

Nuno Lopes: I think so. Unfortunately, I don't do a lot of work in my gym. But I know that it's something that is very important, whether it's publicising healthy habits, providing information or teaching. I think so, I think social networks makes all the difference. Especially with the work that influencers have done during the pandemic and post-pandemic.

Ana Almeida: How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who don't go to the gym and want to? How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who already go to the gym? What about women's self-esteem and motivation?

Nuno Lopes: One of the things I've realised over the six years I've been here. Initially, when I opened the gym, the way people behaved was different from now. I've noticed a lot that people's style of training is very much down to what's on social networks. Whether it's exercises, forms of training or even diet. I notice that there is this direct influence from social networks, without a doubt. On the one hand, the content has a positive influence. To lead a more active, healthier life. For me, that's already a substantial gain compared to the past. On the other hand, in terms of training and nutrition, there are situations that are not so positive in my opinion. There's a lot of information out there, and it's normal for people not to be able to decipher what's good and what's not. I feel that most people, and the clients I have, do everything by imitation, even though they don't really understand what they're doing.

Ana Almeida: How does the gym address the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers? What other aspects do you think are portrayed less realistically on social networks and what impact might this have on women joining the gym?

Nuno Lopes: I think the impact has been positive. The marketing itself, and the influencers who we see as if they were our friends, ends up making it easier to make our habits healthier. There's always the worrying question of an influencer being anabolised and us trying to reach that point that will never happen in life. And I think the role of the exercise coach is to show people that this is not the right way. Yes, training, yes, eating well, but in a more credible and normal way within our daily lives. I actively, and some of my colleagues, actively try to deviate from this context. Anyone who comes here, who has little or no experience, who sees something on social networks from an influencer or even an athlete, realises that the objectives end up being a little disfigured from what reality is and what we are. A workout that a Brazilian bodybuilder does, who takes anabolic steroids, doesn't have the same habits as someone who goes to the gym here. I believe, both myself and my colleagues, that our role is to open people's eyes and try to teach them that this isn't how it's done. And when you do, it has to be on our terms and the way we are. That's kind of our role these days.

Ana Almeida: Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

Nuno Lopes: No.

Ana Almeida: Thank you very much for your co-operation.

E9 (Portuguese version)

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia?

Sónia Nascimento: Em tempos de pandemia nos mantivemos os nossos serviços ativos dentro daquilo que era possível na altura fazer. Nas nossas plataformas online. Também tivemos aluguer de material para as pessoas poderem treinar em casa e fazerem as nossas aulas em casa. Quando foi possível fazer treino ao ar livre, fizemos treino ao ar livre. Quando foi possível fazer treino de um para um, também o fizemos. Portanto sempre que houve alternativas nós apostamos no nosso serviço dentro daquilo que era possível prestar. Nunca paramos. Efetivamente após a pandemia sentiu-se uma preocupação em relação a saúde. As pessoas estavam mais preocupadas com a saúde do que com a parte

estética, mas ao fim destes anos o que eu sinto é que voltamos aos nossos hábitos antigos. Portanto quem pratica ginásio, existem múltiplas diferenças. Umas por saúde, outras por estética, outras por indicações, outras porque querem manter uma vida ativa. Existem aqui vários motivos para as pessoas fazerem atividade física. Na pandemia basicamente foi isso. Portanto, não fomos exceção em relação aos setores de mercado pelos desafios que foram impostos. Obviamente houve sócios que cancelaram, houve pessoas que não quiseram manter o processo de treinar me casa a distância.

Houve outras que optaram por treinar sozinhas, mas a maior parte dos clientes mantiveram. Tivemos sempre 50% dos clientes a treinar connosco durante a pandemia, seja em treino personalizado, seja em aulas de grupo, seja através dos treinos que íamos enviando através da nossa plataforma. E não sentimos grande diferença passado 2/3 anos nos padrões de comportamento. A nossa taxa de penetração no mercado a nível nacional no fitness mantem-se. A nossa esta muito próxima disso aqui na cidade de Viseu. Portanto não houve assim grandes diferenças. Houve logo a seguir, mas depois o mercado retomou o seu comportamento habitual e neste momento, mesmo a nível nacional, os números que nos foram apresentados pela AGAP do Portugal Ativo, são muito semelhantes a 2019. Não houve assim muitas alterações. Considera-se que o mercado vai continuar a crescer a este ritmo, mas não sinto que tenha havido assim uma grande alteração no nosso público-alvo. Nós não sentimos isso.

Ana Almeida: Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia? Os novos clientes têm um perfil demográfico (faixa etária e género) semelhante ou são diferentes? Notou alguma alteração na participação de mulheres na prática de musculação?

Sónia Nascimento: A nossa demografia sempre foi muito heterogénea. Sempre tivemos muitas mulheres a participar. Meio meio, mais ou menos. Numas alturas 40%, outras 60%. Mas sempre foi muito heterogéneo. Nunca sentimos que fosse mais homens a procurara musculação ou mais mulheres a procurar aulas de grupo. Obviamente que sabemos que há aulas de grupo que atraem mais o publico feminino, outras o publico masculino. Mas de forma geral em termos de participação não sentimos assim muita diferença. No cycling, no pump, temos tantos homens como mulheres. Se calhar se formos a uma aula de zumba ou pilates temos mais mulheres. Mas na sala de musculação,

até porque as nossas salas de musculação são muito variadas, temos treino funcional, peso livre para trabalho de força, muito material cardiovascular, um bom acompanhamento em sala, e, portanto, sempre vimos mulheres e homens a treinar na sala. Não vemos muitas diferenças nesse sentido.

Talvez as mulheres não estejam, ou tenham ultrapassado alguns mitos do treino de força e que efetivamente já não se sentem tao fora de água a fazer esses treinos. Mas nos sempre tivemos muitas mulheres na musculação. Mesmo pessoa mais velhas a fazer treino de força. Sempre foi uma das nossas bases na prescrição de treino. Como todos os clientes que temos fazem uma avaliação física e depois é passada uma prescrição de treino para essas pessoas. Sempre houve mulheres a fazer treino de força e continua a haver. A única coisa que eu considero que efetivamente tem acontecido em termos de mercado, é nós temos uma dificuldade muito grande ali entre os 15 e os 22 anos, na fase de entrada para ensino secundário e universidade, em que tínhamos pouca gente porque tínhamos pouca oferta em Viseu. A oferta em Viseu vai aumentando em Viseu ao longo do tempo, e ainda bem. Sentimos que os miúdos que estavam connosco, desde as classes infantis, tinham ali uma interrupção e havia poucos praticantes no nosso ginásio nessa faixa etária. Agora já sentimos que há mais pessoas nessa faixa etária, talvez porque seja uma geração mais preocupada com a saúde do que a anterior. Acho que foi a única diferença que nos sentimos.

Ana Almeida: Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação?

Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação?

Sónia Nascimento: Nós viemos de um estilo de marketing offline, para o online. Estamos abertos há quase 17 anos e, portanto, somos pré redes sociais. Eu lembro me de criarmos a nossa página do Hi5, depois Facebook, depois Instagram, depois o Tik Tok. E sem dúvida há uma forma de consumir o marketing e os serviços completamente distintos do que acontecia há 17, há 15 ou há 10 anos atras. Sem dúvida. Para o bom e para o mau, como é óbvio. Aquilo que nós sentimos é que numa fase inicial de marketing online, sentimos que havia muita oferta online, profissional e não profissional que nos levava para uma disputa de atenção daquilo que eram os nossos serviços para esse publico. Ou

seja, era muito mais fácil alguém da mesma idade, chegar e postar um vídeo de um treino e esse público seguir e ser influenciado por essa pessoa, mais do que propriamente por um ginásio com um instrutor mais maduro e com alguma experiência. Sentimos isso numa fase inicial aí na pré-pandemia. E sem dúvida que houve um boom durante a pandemia.

Neste momento já não sentimos tanto isso. Aliás, umas das tendências de 2023 apresentada numa convenção de fitness nos Estados Unidos é haver uma grande procura por profissionais qualificados. Já não basta ser um bom influencer, já não basta eu fazer treinos para mim espetaculares. As pessoas já se preocupam em procurar pessoas de referência, que sejam profissionais e que tenham resultados na área. Isso faz com que os ginásios tenham vantagem porque têm acesso a um leque de instrutores que permite chegar a várias pessoas. Por outro lado, eu não sinto que os grandes consumidores das redes sociais neste momento seja só o público jovem. As grandes interações que nós temos nas nossas páginas são entre os 35 e 55 anos, por incrível que pareça. Talvez porque os jovens não sejam tanto de por um like ou deixar um comentário. Podem ver, mas não interagir tanto. Em termos de interações temos um público mais velho e que se calhar até já tem mais tempo, já está mais estabilizado no trabalho. E acabamos por ter aí um público muito interessante em termos de interação. O público mais jovem em termos de consumo, não chega o conhecimento teórico. Temos eu apresentar resultados porque eles não confiam só na pessoa que diz que é assim que tem de se fazer. Tem de haver resultados. E isso sim, é diferente. Enquanto o público mais velho, se houver um médico que diga que é assim, independentemente se o médico faz ou não faz, é ou não é uma personagem viva daquilo que ele diz. As pessoas mais velhas não têm qualquer tipo de problema em que o médico diga que têm de deixar de fumar e que ele fume. O público mais jovem já não. As pessoas que dizem que é assim que tem de se fazer tem de ser exemplo daquilo que está a dizer. Aí sinto que há uma mudança e que se procuram mais as pessoas que têm esse tipo de resultado consigo e com os outros, do que propriamente alguém que até esta no mercado há mais tempo, mas que diz que é assim só de forma empírica.

Ana Almeida: Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que não frequentam o ginásio e pretendem vir a frequentar?

Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que já frequentam o ginásio? E a autoestima e motivação das mulheres?

Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers?

Sónia Nascimento: Esse é um dos grandes desafios de quem é profissional desta área. Percebemos perfeitamente quais são os problemas de fazer corta matos. Ainda há pouco tempo estava a conversa e disse que tinha visto uma publicação de uma ex aluna minha a dizer que a única maneira de conseguir emagrecimento é pesar toda a comida, fazer um jornal diário de todo o que se come. E nós sabemos o que é que as restrições fazem em termos mentais, psicológicos e emocionais. E algumas não são sustentáveis ao longo do tempo e nem são saudáveis. Restringir a peito de frango, arroz branco e brócolos durante semanas inteiras. E aveia de manhã com uma bebida vegetal. Nós sabemos em termos de défice nutricional do que estamos a falar. Efetivamente têm resultados a curto prazo e esse é um dos grandes desafios. É nos sabermos que não existem atalhos, nem corta caminhos. Porque têm sem dúvida uma consequência muito negativa a longo prazo. Mas o que costuma dizer é, quem nos procura com o intuito de fazer, nós também temos pessoas preparadas para explicar que não é a melhor solução. Mas nós também temos de perceber sempre que quem consome o serviço acaba por ditar sempre o ritmo do objetivo que quer e o ritmo a que esse objetivo é feito. Se formos uma pessoa mais comprometida, obviamente vai ter resultados mais rápidos. Se temos pessoas que vem só pelo objetivo final, provavelmente daí a uns tempos depois de atingir os resultados voltam a como estavam antes porque não há uma mudança efetiva de hábitos. Se há pessoas mais preguiçosas e com mais dificuldade em gerir o seu tempo, os resultados vão ser mais lentos. Depende sempre da pessoa. Há uma métrica que nos usamos muito que é, nós de alguma forma comercializamos aquilo que as pessoas querem e entregamos aquilo que ela precisa para atingir. Se nos chega uma pessoa que quer perder 10 quilos nos efetivamente comercializamos uma solução que lhe permita atingir esse resultado, mas depois vamos entregar o que ela precisa para isso. Nós não vamos entregar o resultado. Vamos entregar o caminho que a pessoas precisa percorrer para chegar a esse resultado. Efetivamente, diariamente, vemos pessoas não profissionais, e alguns até profissionais da área, venderem programas milagrosos que se calhar como tiveram resultados com elas e com mais 2 ou 3 clientes, mas depois 90% dos clientes não vai atingir. Ou atingem, mas estão a colocarem causa a sua saúde. o exemplo que nos temos tido a nível internacional, inclusive até da Madeira e dos Açores é que o online comece a ser regulamentado em

termos de prescrição de treino. Nos açores tudo o que é comercializado online tem de ter um título profissional. Esta a acontecer o mesmo com suplementação.

E, portanto, acredito que vamos entrar, apesar de ser desafiante, vamos entrado aí aos poucos. Depois cabe a cada marca e a cada profissional entregar o melhor ao mercado. Não há gurus no mercado que se mantenha no mercado muito tempo vendendo uma coisa que depois não conseguem entregar as pessoas. Principalmente no online. Se alguém vai a um restaurante que dizem que é bom e depois chega lá e é mal atendido, imediatamente fazemos uma crítica. Se forem lá 10 pessoas e fizeram 10 críticas negativas, a reputação do restaurante vai diminuir e mais cedo ou mais tarde vai definhir. E o online também tem isto bom. Rapidamente as pessoas criticam positiva e negativamente, e rapidamente o mercado vai aniquilar. Não deixa de ser um desafio termos tanta gente não entendida ou não profissional. Eu também acho que isso aconteceu na pandemia e logo a seguir, e agora o mercado já se esta a auto regular. Quanto a isso, encontramos muita gente que vem e nem quer fazer avaliação física connosco e que vem com um plano de treino de alguém que não conhece e que foi tirado online e nós temos de fazer esse processo de dizer “isso não é o mais adequado, não tens técnica suficiente para isto, estas a fazer um intervalo de recuperação muito longo ou muito curto, tens que dar intensidade, aumentar carga”. E as próprias pessoas nos pedem ajuda e esse é o nosso papel enquanto ginásio, também fazer essa parte educacional.

Ana Almeida: Que outros aspetos pensam serem retratados de forma menos realista nas redes sociais e que impacto pode ter na adesão de mulheres ao ginásio?

Sónia Nascimento: Primeiro, nos estamos num paradigma em que não convencemos ninguém a treinar. Eu digo isto porque acima de tudo, a postura de quem está a comercializar um serviço mudou bastante. Antigamente nós tínhamos o típico vendedor que ia de porta a porta convencer que os seus produtos eram os melhores e que as pessoas os deviam comprar. Hoje em dia estamos numa era de consumo em que isso não acontece, pelo menos em grande parte do mercado. O que acontece no marketing hoje em dia é que nos encontramos quais são as dores dos nossos clientes e encontramos soluções. E as pessoas decidem que querem comprar essa solução. Então nós trabalhamos muito pouco com pessoas que estão em pré contemplação, ou que ainda nem sequer sabem que precisam do nosso serviço, ou pessoas que acham que precisam, mas não estão ainda muito convencidas em comprar. O nosso maior foco é em pessoas que já estão na fase da

ação. Pessoas que efetivamente perceberam que têm uma necessidade e nós vamos perceber qual é essa necessidade e encontrar uma solução.

Agora, a pergunta pode ser quando uma mulher vem procurar os nossos serviços, quer seja porque lhe pusemos esse serviço a frente através das redes sociais, numa publicação a falar sobre o tipo de treino, e que a pessoa sente que está a precisar de fazer alguma coisa, os grandes motivos pelos que as mulheres nos chegam até nós, na grande maioria, ainda vêm para controlo de peso. Perda de peso e melhoria da composição corporal. Mesmo não alterando muito o peso, diminuir gordura e aumentar a massa muscular. Aquilo que as pessoas chamam de tonificação. Apesar de não haver uma alteração de peso, há uma alteração da composição corporal da mulher e também definição muscular. Isto numa fase até aos 35 anos. A partir daí muitas mulheres que nos chegam com problemas de coluna, varizes, doenças autoimunes, fibromialgia, artrite reumatoide, situações de pré menopausa. Cada vez mais doentes com doenças severas e limitantes. E aquilo que nós sentimos é que após a mulher, principalmente depois de ter sido mãe, estar estabilizada na sua vida, vem muito mais pela saúde e pelo bem-estar, à procura de uma solução para ser uma pessoa saudável. Há sempre mulheres mais velhas que vêm para perda de peso porque a obesidade é uma doença da nossa sociedade. E as mulheres mais novas por uma questão mais estética de definição muscular, perda de peso e melhoria da composição corporal. Aquilo que nós propomos quando essas pessoas nos chegam é efetivamente perceber qual é o objetivo, porque é importante atingir esse objetivo, qual a disponibilidade que a pessoa tem para dedicar, em quanto tempo quer atingir esse objetivo. E apresentamos esse serviço. E o treino de força é fundamental. Não há nenhum estudo no mercado que diga que o treino de força tem algum tipo de malefício para a saúde. Não há. Obviamente sempre adaptada as limitações de cada pessoa e aquilo que é indicado para aquela pessoa naquela situação específica. Mas é fundamental. E todas as entidades do nosso país deviam estar mais comprometidas a inspirar as pessoas a perceber que todos nós temos uma necessidade em termos de exercício físico. Para sairmos dos 7% de taxa de penetração em termos de praticantes de ginásio e passarmos para os 25% que é a média europeia. Todas as pessoas têm necessidade de treinar, só que ainda não perceberam que a solução é essa. Achar que a solução, porque é mais fácil, é tomar um comprimido ou comer uma fruta, ou usar uma cinta porque tenho dores. Porque vivemos numa época em que queremos recompensas rápidas e não queremos compromisso com

algo que só traz resultados ao fim de algum tempo. Se alguém almeja ser saudável, necessita fazer treino de força. Tão simples quanto isso.

Ana Almeida: Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

Sónia Nascimento: Não.

Ana Almeida: Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

E9 (English version)

To begin with, I would ask you to describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic?

Sónia Nascimento: In times of pandemic, we kept our services active within what was possible at the time. On our online platforms. We also rented equipment so that people could train at home and take our classes at home. When it was possible to do outdoor training, we did outdoor training. When it was possible to do one-to-one training, we did that too. So whenever there were alternatives, we focussed on our service within what we could provide. We never stopped. In fact, after the pandemic there was concern about health. People were more concerned about health than aesthetics, but after all these years what I feel is that we've gone back to our old habits. So there are many differences between people who practise gymnastics. Some for health, others for aesthetics, others for indications, others because they want to maintain an active life. There are many reasons why people do physical activity. That's basically what the pandemic was all about. So we were no exception when it came to market sectors because of the challenges that were imposed. Obviously, there were members who cancelled, there were people who didn't want to keep up the process of training at home from a distance.

There were others who chose to train on their own, but most of our clients stayed with us. We've always had 50% of our clients training with us during the pandemic, whether in personalized training, group classes or through the workouts we were sending out on our platform. And we haven't felt much difference in behaviour patterns after 2/3 years. Our

penetration rate in the national fitness market remains the same. Ours is very close to that here in the city of Viseu. So there were no major differences. There was one soon after, but then the market resumed its usual behaviour and at the moment, even at a national level, the figures presented to us by AGAP from Portugal Ativo are very similar to 2019. There haven't been many changes. It's considered that the market will continue to grow at this rate, but I don't feel that there has been a big change in our target audience. We don't feel it.

Ana Almeida: How has the number of clients evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted? Do the new customers have a similar demographic profile (age group and gender) or are they different? Have you noticed any change in the participation of women in bodybuilding?

Sónia Nascimento: Our demographic has always been very heterogeneous. We've always had a lot of women taking part. Half, more or less. At times 40%, at others 60%. But it's always been very heterogeneous. We've never felt that it was more men looking for bodybuilding or more women looking for group classes. Obviously we know that there are group classes that appeal more to women and others to men. But in general, in terms of participation, we don't feel much difference. In cycling, in pump, we have just as many men as women. Maybe if we go to a zumba or pilates class we have more women. But in the weight room, because our weight rooms are very varied, we have functional training, free weights for strength work, lots of cardiovascular material, good supervision in the room, so we've always seen women and men training in the room. We don't see many differences in that sense.

Maybe women aren't, or maybe they've overcome some of the myths about strength training and don't feel so out of their depth doing it. But we've always had a lot of women in bodybuilding. Even older people doing strength training. It's always been one of our training prescription bases. All our clients undergo a physical assessment and then a training prescription is given to them. There have always been women doing strength training and there still are. The only thing that I think has actually happened in terms of the market is that we had a very difficult time between the ages of 15 and 22, when we were entering secondary school and university, when we had few people because there was little on offer in Viseu. The offer in Viseu is increasing over time, and that's a good thing. We felt that the kids who had been with us since the children's classes had been

interrupted and there were few people practicing in our gym in that age group. Now we feel that there are more people in that age group, perhaps because it's a generation more concerned with health than the previous one. I think that's the only difference we've felt.

Ana Almeida: Nowadays, we know the role that social networks plays. Do you think that the content of social networks can influence and change behaviors related to physical exercise and diet? Do you think that social networks has an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women's adherence to bodybuilding?

Sónia Nascimento: We came from an offline marketing style to an online one. We've been open for almost 17 years, so we're pre-social networks. I remember creating our Hi5 page, then Facebook, then Instagram, then Tik Tok. And there's definitely a completely different way of consuming marketing and services than there was 17, 15 or 10 years ago. That's for sure. For better or worse, of course. What we felt was that in the initial phase of online marketing, we felt that there was a lot on offer online, both professional and non-professional, which led us to compete for attention in terms of what our services were for that audience. In other words, it was much easier for someone the same age to come along and post a video of a workout and for that audience to follow and be influenced by that person, rather than by a gym with a more mature instructor with some experience. We felt this at an early stage, pre-pandemic. And there was undoubtedly a boom during the pandemic.

We don't feel that way so much anymore. In fact, one of the trends for 2023 presented at a fitness convention in the United States is that there will be a great demand for qualified professionals. It's no longer enough to be a good influencer, it's no longer enough for me to do spectacular workouts for myself. People are now looking for people of reference, who are professionals and who have achieved results in the field. This gives gyms an advantage because they have access to a range of instructors that allows them to reach many people. On the other hand, I don't feel that the biggest consumers of social networks at the moment are just young people. The biggest interactions we have on our pages are between the ages of 35 and 55, oddly enough. Maybe it's because young people aren't so keen on posting a like or leaving a comment. They may see it, but they don't interact as much. In terms of interactions, we have an older audience, who may have been around longer, who are more stable at work. And we end up with a very interesting audience in terms of interaction. The younger audience, in terms of consumption, doesn't have enough

theoretical knowledge. We have to deliver results because they don't just trust the person who says this is how it has to be done. There have to be results. And that is different. While the older public, if there's a doctor who says it's done this way, regardless of whether the doctor does it or not, is or isn't a living persona of what he says. Older people don't have a problem with the doctor saying they have to stop smoking and that he does. Younger people don't. The person who says that's the way to do it has to be an example of what they're saying. That's where I feel there's a change and that people who have that kind of result with themselves and with others are being sought out, rather than someone who has been in the market for longer, but who says it's only empirically.

Ana Almeida: How do you think fitness content influences the behavior of people who don't go to the gym and want to? How do you think fitness content influences the behavior of people who already go to the gym? What about women's self-esteem and motivation? How does the gym address the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers?

Sónia Nascimento: This is one of the great challenges facing anyone who works in this field. We understand perfectly well what the problems are with cutting through the undergrowth. Just recently I was talking and I said that I'd seen a publication by a former student of mine saying that the only way to lose weight is to weigh all your food, to keep a daily journal of everything you eat. And we know what restrictions do in mental, psychological and emotional terms. And some of them aren't sustainable over time and aren't even healthy. Restricting yourself to chicken breast, white rice and broccoli for weeks on end. And oatmeal in the morning with a vegetable drink. We know what we're talking about in terms of nutritional deficit. They do have short-term results and that's one of the big challenges. It's knowing that there are no shortcuts, no cutting corners. Because they undoubtedly have very negative long-term consequences. But what I often say is, whoever comes to us with the intention of doing something, we also have people prepared to explain that it's not the best solution. But we also always have to realize that those who consume the service always end up dictating the pace of the objective they want and the pace at which that objective is achieved. If you're a more committed person, you'll obviously get faster results. If we have people who come just for the end goal, they'll probably go back to the way they were before after a while because there's no real change in their habits. If there are people who are lazier and find it harder to manage their time,

the results will be slower. It always depends on the person. There's a metric we use a lot, which is that we somehow market what people want and deliver what they need to achieve. If a person comes to us wanting to lose 10 kilos, we effectively market a solution that allows them to achieve that result, but then we deliver what they need to achieve it. We're not going to deliver the result. We're going to deliver the path that people need to take to achieve that result. In fact, on a daily basis, we see non-professionals, and even some professionals in the field, selling miracle programs that may have had results with them and 2 or 3 other clients, but then 90% of the clients won't achieve them. Or they do, but they're jeopardizing their health. The example we've had at international level, including Madeira and the Azores, is that online training is starting to be regulated in terms of training prescriptions. In the Azores, everything sold online must have a professional title. The same is happening with supplements.

And so I think we're going to get there, although it's challenging, we're going to get there little by little. Then it's up to each brand and each professional to deliver the best to the market. There are no gurus in the market who can stay in the market for a long time selling something that they can't then deliver to people. Especially online. If someone goes to a restaurant that they say is good and then gets there and is poorly served, we immediately criticize it. If 10 people go there and give 10 negative reviews, the restaurant's reputation will diminish and sooner or later it will wither away. And there's a good thing about online. People quickly criticize positively and negatively, and the market will quickly collapse. It's still a challenge to have so many people who don't understand or are unprofessional. I also think that happened during the pandemic and afterwards, and now the market is regulating itself. In this regard, we meet a lot of people who come and don't even want to do a physical assessment with us and who come with a training plan from someone they don't know and which was taken online and we have to go through this process of saying "this isn't the most appropriate, you don't have enough technique for this, you're doing a recovery interval that's too long or too short, you have to increase the intensity, increase the load". And people themselves ask us for help and that's our role as a gym, also to do this educational part.

Ana Almeida: What other aspects do you think are portrayed less realistically on social networks and what impact might this have on women joining the gym?

Sónia Nascimento: Firstly, we're in a paradigm in which we don't convince anyone to train. I say this because, above all, the attitude of those who are marketing a service has changed a lot. In the past, we had the typical salesman who went door-to-door to convince people that his products were the best and that people should buy them. Nowadays, we're in a consumer era where that's not the case, at least in a large part of the market. What happens in marketing today is that we find out what our customers' pains are and we find solutions. And people decide that they want to buy that solution. So we work very little with people who are in pre-contemplation, or who don't even know they need our service yet, or people who think they do, but aren't yet convinced to buy. Our main focus is on people who are already in the action phase. People who have actually realized that they have a need and we're going to figure out what that need is and find a solution.

Now, the question may be when a woman comes to us, whether it's because we've put that service in front of her through social networks, in a publication talking about the type of training, and that the person feels they need to do something, the big reasons why women come to us, in the vast majority, still come for weight control. Weight loss and improved body composition. Even if you don't change your weight much, you want to reduce fat and increase muscle mass. What people call toning. Although there is no change in weight, there is a change in a woman's body composition and also muscle definition. This happens up to the age of 35. From then on, many women come to us with back problems, varicose veins, autoimmune diseases, fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, pre-menopausal situations. More and more patients with severe and limiting illnesses. And what we feel is that after a woman, especially after becoming a mother, is stabilized in her life, she comes much more for her health and well-being, looking for a solution to be a healthy person. There are always older women who come for weight loss because obesity is a disease in our society. And younger women come for more aesthetic reasons of muscle definition, weight loss and improved body composition. What we propose when these people come to us is to effectively understand what the goal is, why it's important to achieve that goal, what availability the person has to dedicate, how long they want to achieve that goal. And we offer this service. And strength training is fundamental. There is no study on the market that says that strength training is harmful to health in any way. There isn't. Obviously, it's always adapted to each person's limitations and what is indicated for that person in that specific situation. But it is fundamental. And all the entities in our country should be more committed to inspiring people to realize that we all have a need for physical exercise. In order to move away from the 7% penetration rate in

terms of gym-goers to 25%, which is the European average. Everyone has a need to train, but they haven't yet realized that this is the solution. They think that the solution, because it's easier, is to take a pill or eat some fruit, or wear a girdle because I'm in pain. Because we live in a time when we want quick rewards and don't want to commit to something that only brings results after a while. If you want to be healthy, you need to do strength training. It's as simple as that.

Ana Almeida: Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

Sónia Nascimento: No.

Ana Almeida: Thank you very much for your cooperation.

E10 (Portuguese version)

Para começar, pedia-lhe para descrever como o seu ginásio lidou com os desafios da pandemia?

Rui Gomes: O que nós fizemos foi, nós cedemos material a quem treinava na altura. O pessoal pode escolher uma peça de equipamento. Um elástico, um kettlebell, um halter, um disco de peso, ou uma bola. Pelo menos um desses quatro as pessoas podiam escolher e levar consoante a disponibilidade. E fazíamos treinos online, fazíamos duas aulas por dia através do Zoom. Estava sempre eu a dar o treino. E temos uma aplicação onde as pessoas veem informações sobre as aulas e as pessoas nessa aplicação tinha a descrição do treino, do aquecimento. Uma aula de cerca de 45 minutos. E as pessoas podiam fazer autonomamente ou ao mesmo tempo. Tínhamos uma as 7h da manhã e tínhamos outra depois a tarde. Os horários não foram sempre estes porque fomos ajustando consoante a disponibilidade, mas basicamente eram duas aulas por dia. Para quem fazia autonomamente, ainda assim tínhamos uns vídeos onde explicava e demonstrava os exercícios. Para aquelas pessoas que tinham dificuldade em acompanhar os horários das chamadas de Zoom que fazíamos, as pessoas tinham os vídeos de cada exercício para verem como podiam fazer. Nós não cobramos nenhum valor, fizemos esse serviço de forma gratuita e cada um contribuía como podia. Assim como nós fechamos, havia mais

gente na mesma situação de fechar portas de negócios próprios. E nos por uma questão de justiça achamos que era altura de ajudar.

Ana Almeida: Como foi a evolução no número de clientes desde o levantamento das restrições pós-pandemia?

Rui Gomes: Houve uma procura grande, principalmente de pessoas que vinham de ginásios convencionais. Quando reabrimos portas o que nós notamos, com as pessoas que vinham aparecendo, era que a maioria que vinha do ginásio convencional, procurava segurança e higiene um bocadinho melhores. Nos ginásios havia regras mas não havia pessoas suficientes para verificar que as pessoas limpavam os equipamentos depois de usarem. O nosso espaço é aberto, a sala é aberta. E quando reabrimos limitamos a 10 ou 12 pessoas. Reabrimos com cerca de 60% da lotação. E nos delineámos no chão a estação com o material que seria usado no treino. Uma barra, pesos, e as pessoas usavam esse material e no final já tinham lá tudo o que era preciso para fazer a desinfeção. Tinham um borrifador de desinfetante e papel e limpavam as superfícies que utilizavam. No material e no chão. Havia outro cuidado que nos ginásios convencionais as pessoas não viam. E isso foi uma coisa positiva para nós. Acho que houve mais procura por causa disso. Depois das restrições levantadas e nos 3 meses a seguir houve um crescimento muito grande.

Ana Almeida: Os novos clientes têm um perfil demográfico (faixa etária e género) semelhante ou são diferentes?

Rui Gomes: O nosso público sempre foi mais ou menos o mesmo. A média de idades deve andar nos 30/35. Diria que temos neste momento cerca de 60% de homens e 40% de mulheres. E mesmo nos tempos antes da pandemia penso que sempre foi dentro destes valores. Não sei se nos outros sítios será assim, mas aqui temos mais ou menos equilibrado entre homens e mulheres.

Ana Almeida: Nos dias de hoje, sabemos o papel que as redes sociais desempenham. Pensa que o conteúdo das redes sociais possa influenciar e alterar comportamentos relacionados com a prática de exercício físico e com a alimentação?

Que tipo de conteúdo é partilhado nas redes sociais do seu ginásio e que impacto causa nos clientes e potenciais clientes?

Rui Gomes: Sinceramente não sei. Nós não usamos muito as nossas redes sociais como forma de captar clientes. Fazemos incentivos a prática de desporto e convidamos pessoas a virem experimentar. Já tivemos publicações sobre nutrição, sobre treino, com brincadeiras que aqui se passam. Mas não notei, mesmo quando estávamos mais ativos e até tínhamos uma pessoa até responsável por isso, que tivéssemos mais gente por aquilo que estava nas nossas publicações. Porque aquilo que nos fazemos, toda a gente faz. Os influencers, muitos deles ligados a desporto e atividade física em geral. Fazem um bocadinho de mais do mesmo. As pessoas já são tão bombardeadas com tanta coisa.

Ana Almeida: Pensa que as redes sociais têm influência na visibilidade do ginásio e da prática de musculação? E na adesão de mulheres à musculação?

Rui Gomes: E o Instagram é a rede social que nós usamos mais. Nunca notei que trouxesse mais gente. O que eu noto que traz mais gente é o nosso serviço agradar alguém e esse alguém trazer pessoas que acha que vão gostar também. O passa palavra sempre foi a melhor forma de nos trazerem pessoas. Em termos de redes sociais não acho que tenha havido nada que tenha cativado mais ou menos as pessoas.

Ana Almeida: Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que não frequentam o ginásio e pretendem vir a frequentar?

Como acha que o conteúdo fitness influencia os comportamentos de pessoas que já frequentam o ginásio? E a autoestima e motivação das mulheres?

Qual a sua opinião sobre o conteúdo partilhado por influencers no contexto do fitness?

Rui Gomes: Meter tudo no mesmo saco é difícil. O que eu quero dizer é, há pessoas que fazem esse trabalho, mas fazem como, aquilo que eles mostram é coisas que nem 10%, nem 5% da população vai fazer. Exercícios mais complexos, cargas pesadas, um exercício de halterofilismo ou de ginástica mais difícil. É bonito de ver, eu se calhar até fazia, mas muita gente olha para aquilo e pensa “Ya, é giro mas eu nunca vou fazer isso”. Isso acontece quando as pessoas vêm cá e estão a fazer um treino pela primeira vez. Um treino desses é muito diferente de uma aula que estaria a acontecer ao mesmo tempo, de um nível mais avançado. Onde é que eu quero chegar, há influencers que partilham coisas que nunca vão chegar a pessoas sedentárias que olham para as publicações e pensam que

nunca vão fazer aquilo e aquilo não é para elas. E depois há um outro grupo de influencers que trabalha aquilo que as pessoas precisam. Exercícios mais simples, tentar mostrar o porquê de se fazer em vez de só mostrar o que se faz. E é preciso saber procurar por isso. No caso do crossfit, se pesquisares no Youtube, as 10 primeiras coisas que aparecem são coisas que a maioria da população nunca vai fazer. São vídeos de competições de topo, os melhores do mundo que vão aos crossfit games. Também aparece muita coisa de lesões, porque se criou essa ideia de que o crossfit é muito associado a lesões. E só mais para a frente é que aparecem conteúdos mais educativos a explicar exercícios, e benefícios. Mas só quando fazes uma pesquisa mais específica. Se calhar, por isso, as redes não incentivam no sentido de “se calhar devia experimentar porque vai fazer me bem”, mas sim no “vou experimentar porque quero tentar fazer aquilo”. E isso é um grupo mais pequeno do que aqueles que precisam que lhes faça bem.

Ana Almeida: Qual a possibilidade de expandir ou ajustar serviços oferecidos pela demanda crescente de mulheres na musculação?

Como o ginásio aborda a realidade de que o progresso na musculação pode levar tempo face aos resultados rápidos retratados nas redes sociais pelos influencers?

Que outros aspetos pensam serem retratados de forma menos realista nas redes sociais e que impacto pode ter na adesão de mulheres ao ginásio?

Rui Gomes: Nós temos um plano específico para o público feminino que procura mais trabalho de pernas, de glúteos e de abdominais. São partes do corpo que as mulheres procuram desenvolver. Quanto ao crossfit mesmo, normalmente as pessoas associam as mulheres no crossfit com ombros mais desenvolvidos, braços mais desenvolvidos. E pode acontecer se as mulheres treinarem com dedicação. Mas aquelas mulheres que se veem nos vídeos do Youtube e do Instagram, geneticamente já esta predispostas a desenvolver musculo a um nível que a maior parte das mulheres não estaria. E há mulheres por quem passas no dia a dia e não dás conta do desenvolvimento muscular que mostram as vezes em fotos depois de um treino. O músculo está inchado, esteve a fazer treino, e fica muito mais definido e dá a sensação de serem maiores do que são na realidade. Por isso, as mulheres não têm de ter medo de ficar grandes a fazer 3 treinos por semana. Nós tentamos explicar as vantagens do treino de alta intensidade a curto/médio prazo, que são o tipo de resultados que as pessoas procuram, na perda de massa gorda. Ou seja, é a forma científica, está provado, e não é só no crossfit, é em qualquer treino de alta intensidade.

Os resultados na perda de massa gorda são rápidos comparados com outros tipos de treino. É uma forma de tentar cativar as mulheres. E mostrar exemplos. Mulheres com abdominais definidos, braços não muito grandes, o rabo mais definido, pernas definidas. É a forma que temos de fazer com que as mulheres queiram pelo menos vir experimentar. E explicar que as mulheres grandes são as que se veem no Instagram, e que aqui não são assim tão grandes (risos).

Ana Almeida: Deseja acrescentar alguma informação pertinente ao tema?

Rui Gomes: Não.

Ana Almeida: Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

E10 (English version)

To begin with, could you describe how your gym has dealt with the challenges of the pandemic?

Rui Gomes: What we did was, we gave material to those who were training at the time. The staff could choose a piece of equipment. An elastic band, a kettlebell, a dumbbell, a weight disk, or a ball. People could choose at least one of these four and take it with them depending on availability. And we did online training, two classes a day via Zoom. I was always giving the workout. And we had an app where people could see information about the classes, and in that app people could see a description of the workout, the warm-up. A class of about 45 minutes. And people could do it independently or at the same time. We had one at 7am and another in the afternoon. The times weren't always the same because we adjusted them according to availability, but basically there were two classes a day. For those who did it independently, we still had videos explaining and demonstrating the exercises. For those people who found it difficult to keep up with the timetable of the Zoom calls we made, they had the videos of each exercise to see how they could do it. We didn't charge any money, we did this service for free and everyone contributed as they could. Just as we closed down, there were other people in the same

situation who were closing down their own businesses. And for the sake of fairness, we thought it was time to help.

Ana Almeida: How has the number of clients evolved since the post-pandemic restrictions were lifted?

Rui Gomes: There was a lot of demand, especially from people who came from conventional gyms. When we reopened our doors, what we noticed, with the people who came in, was that the majority who came from conventional gyms were looking for a little better safety and hygiene. In the gyms there were rules but not enough people to check that people cleaned the equipment after use. Our space is open, the room is open. And when we reopened we limited it to 10 or 12 people. We reopened with about 60% of the capacity. And we set up a station on the floor with the equipment that would be used for training. A bar, weights, and people used this material and at the end they had everything they needed to disinfect it. They had a spray bottle of disinfectant and paper and they cleaned the surfaces they used. On the equipment and on the floor. There was another kind of care that people didn't see in conventional gyms. And that was a positive thing for us. I think there was more demand because of that. After the restrictions were lifted and in the three months that followed, there was a huge increase.

Ana Almeida: Do the new customers have a similar demographic profile (age group and gender) or are they different?

Rui Gomes: Our audience has always been more or less the same. The average age is probably around 30/35. I'd say we're about 60% men and 40% women at the moment. And even before the pandemic, I think it was always within these figures. I don't know if it's the same elsewhere, but here it's more or less balanced between men and women.

Ana Almeida: Nowadays, we know the role that social networks play. Do you think that social networks content can influence and change behaviours related to physical exercise and diet? What kind of content is shared on your gym's social networks and what impact does it have on clients and potential clients?

Rui Gomes: I honestly don't know. We don't use our social networks much as a way of attracting clients. We encourage people to do sport and invite them to come and try it out. We've had posts about nutrition, about training, with jokes that go on here. But I didn't notice, even when we were more active and we even had a person responsible for this, that we had more people interested in what was in our publications. Because what we do, everyone does. The influencers, many of them linked to sport and physical activity in general. They do a bit more of the same. People are already bombarded with so much.

Ana Almeida: Do you think that social networks have an influence on the visibility of the gym and bodybuilding? And on women taking up bodybuilding?

Rui Gomes: Instagram is the social networks we use the most. I've never noticed that it brings in more people. What I notice that brings in more people is that our service pleases someone and that someone brings in people they think will like it too. Word of mouth has always been the best way to bring people to us. In terms of social networks, I don't think there's been anything that has captivated people more or less.

Ana Almeida: How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who don't go to the gym and want to? How do you think fitness content influences the behaviour of people who already go to the gym? What about women's self-esteem and motivation? What do you think about the content shared by influencers in the context of fitness?

Rui Gomes: To lump everything together is difficult. What I mean is, there are people who do this work, but they do it like, what they show are things that not 10%, not 5% of the population will do. More complex exercises, heavy loads, a more difficult weightlifting or gymnastics exercise. It's nice to see, I might even do it, but a lot of people look at it and think 'Yeah, it's nice but I'll never do it'. That happens when people come here and are training for the first time. A training session like that is very different from a class that would be happening at the same time, at a more advanced level. What I'm getting at is that there are influencers who share things that will never reach sedentary people who look at the publications and think they will never do that and it's not for them. And then there's another group of influencers who work on what people need. Simpler

exercises, trying to show why you do them rather than just showing what you do. And you have to know how to look for that.

In the case of crossfit, if you search on YouTube, the first 10 things that come up are things that the majority of the population will never do. They're videos of top competitions, the best in the world going to the crossfit games. There's also a lot of stuff about injuries, because this idea has been created that crossfit is closely associated with injuries. And it's only later on that more educational content appears explaining exercises and benefits. But only when you do a more specific search. Maybe that's why the networks don't encourage it in the sense of 'maybe I should try it because it'll be good for me', but rather in the sense of 'I'm going to try it because I want to try it'. And that's a smaller group than those who need it to be good for them.

Ana Almeida: What is the possibility of expanding or adjusting the services offered due to the growing demand for women in bodybuilding? How does the gym address the reality that progress in bodybuilding can take time compared to the quick results portrayed on social networks by influencers? What other aspects do you think are portrayed less realistically on social networks and what impact might this have on women joining the gym?

Rui Gomes: We have a specific plan for women who are looking for more work on their legs, glutes and abs. These are parts of the body that women are looking to develop. As for crossfit itself, people usually associate women in crossfit with more developed shoulders, more developed arms. And it can happen if women train with dedication. But those women you see in YouTube and Instagram videos are genetically predisposed to developing muscle at a level that most women wouldn't be. And there are women you pass by on a daily basis and you don't notice the muscle development they sometimes show in photos after a workout. The muscle is swollen, it's been working out, and it's much more defined and makes them look bigger than they really are. So women don't have to be afraid of getting big by doing three workouts a week. We try to explain the advantages of high-intensity training in the short/medium term, which are the kind of results people are looking for when it comes to losing fat mass. In other words, it's the scientific way, it's proven, and it's not just in CrossFit, it's in any high-intensity training. The results in losing fat mass are quick compared to other types of training. It's a way of trying to captivate women. And show examples. Women with defined abs, arms that aren't

too big, a more defined arse, defined legs. It's our way of making women want to at least come and try. And to explain that the big women are the ones you see on Instagram, and that here they're not that big (laughs).

Ana Almeida: Would you like to add any more information on the subject?

Rui Gomes: No.

Ana Almeida: Thank you very much for your co-operation.

APPENDIX 2 - QUESTIONNAIRES

(Portuguese version)

O meu nome é Ana Almeida e encontro-me neste momento a escrever a minha dissertação para conclusão de estudos no Mestrado em Marketing pela Escola Superior de Tecnologia e Gestão do Instituto Politécnico de Viseu. Como parte desta dissertação estou a fazer questionários a frequentadoras de ginásios do distrito de Viseu para obter informações relevantes para a análise que pretendo realizar. Gostaria de contar com a sua participação neste breve questionário (5 minutos).

Idade

Menos de 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

Mais de 65

Habilitações académicas

12º ano

Licenciatura

Mestrado

Doutoramento

Profissão

Estudante

Trabalhadora full-time

Trabalhadora part-time

Desempregada

Reformada

Concelho onde treina

Armamar
Carregal do Sal
Lamego
Mangualde
Oliveira de Frades
Taruca
Tondela
Vila Nova de Paiva
Viseu

Há quanto tempo frequenta o ginásio?

Menos de 1 ano
Há 1 ano
Entre 2 e 3 anos
Entre 3 e 4 anos
Entre 4 e 5 anos
Há mais de 5 anos

Quais são os motivos que a levam a frequentar o ginásio?

Saúde física
Saúde mental
Estética
Auto-estima
Socialização
Gravidez e/ou pós-parto
Prevenção de doenças
Objetivos pessoais
Redes sociais

Que tipo de atividades prefere no ginásio?

Sala de musculação (treino de força, treino funcional)
Aulas de grupo (Yoga, Zumba, Pump)
Exercícios cardiovasculares (Cycling, Passadeira)

Com que frequência frequenta a sala de musculação?

1 a 2 vezes por semana

3 a 5 vezes por semana

Mais de 5 vezes por semana

Não frequento a sala de musculação

Com que frequência usa plataformas de redes sociais?

Todos os dias

Várias vezes por semana

Poucas vezes por semana

Raramente

Nunca

Consome conteúdo relacionado com o fitness nas redes sociais?

Sim

Não

Se sim, com que frequência?

Todos os dias

Várias vezes por semana

Poucas vezes por semana

Raramente

Se sim, que tipo de conteúdo?

Treinos e exercícios

Nutrição e alimentação

Suplementação

Motivação e inspiração

Avaliação de produtos e equipamentos

Eventos e desafios

Comunidade e interação

Segue algum(a) influencer nas redes sociais?

Sim

Não

Se sim, quem?

Já experimentou algum programa de treino ou exercício porque viu nas redes sociais?

Sim

Não

Já experimentou alguma receita porque viu nas redes sociais?

Sim

Não

Acredita que o conteúdo presente nas redes sociais promove comportamentos saudáveis?

Sim

Não

(English version)

My name is Ana Almeida and I'm currently writing my dissertation to complete my Master's degree in Marketing at the School of Technology and Management of the Polytechnic Institute of Viseu. As part of this dissertation, I'm carrying out questionnaires with gym-goers in the Viseu district in order to obtain relevant information for the analysis I intend to carry out. I would like to count on your participation in this short questionnaire (6 minutes).

Age

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

Over 65

Academic qualifications

12th grade

Bachelor's Degree

Masters Degree

Doctorate

Occupation

Student

Full-time worker

Part-time worker

Unemployed

Retired

Council where you train

Armamar

Carregal do Sal

Lamego

Mangualde

Oliveira de Frades

Tarouca

Tondela

Vila Nova de Paiva

Viseu

How long have you been going to the gym?

Less than a year

A year

Between 2 and 3 years

Between 3 and 4 years

Between 4 and 5 years

Over 5 years

What are the reasons you go to the gym?

Physical health

Mental health

Aesthetics

Self-esteem

Socialising

Pregnancy and/or postpartum

Disease prevention

Personal goals

Social networks

What kind of activities do you prefer in the gym?

Weight room (strength training, functional training)

Group classes (Yoga, Zumba, Pump)

Cardiovascular exercises (cycling, treadmill)

How often do you go to the weight room?

1 or 2 times a week

3 to 5 times a week

More than 5 times a week

I don't

How often do you use social networks platforms?

Every day

Several times a week

A few times a week

Rarely

Never

Do you consume fitness-related content on social networks?

Yes

No

If so, how often?

Every day

Several times a week

A few times a week

Rarely

If yes, what type of content?

Training and exercise

Nutrition and food

Supplementation

Motivation and inspiration

Product and equipment reviews

Events and challenges

Community and interaction

Do you follow any influencers on social networks?

Yes

No

If so, who?

Have you tried a training program or exercise because you saw it on social networks?

Yes

No

Have you tried a recipe because you saw it on social networks?

Yes

No

Do you believe that content on social networks promotes healthy behaviour?

Yes

No

