Does Types of Exercise Matter? Self Determination Theory and Consumer Engagement in Fitness Industry

Tae Ho Kim, Washington State University
Yong Jae Ko (Advisor), University of Florida
Jong Eun Lee, Washington State University
Jae-Pil Ha, Gyeongsang National University

Marketing - Motivation (Physical Activity)
20-minute oral presentation (including questions)
Abstract 2019-357
Saturday, June 1, 2019 10:10 AM
Room: Maurepas

Currently, many researchers stress the importance of extra-role behavior, explained as going “beyond the call of duty and voluntary efforts” (Li, 2010). In the past decade, scholars have attempted to understand customers’ extra-role behaviors (Yoshida et al., 2014) and found that it is a result of engagement (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009; Kim & Ko, in review). Although many scholars identified the importance of engagement, further research is needed to determine why consumers engage.

Current research has focused on motivation, a key factor in the effectiveness of exercise programs (Verloigne et al., 2011). Prior research has explained the motivation of exercise with self-determination theory (SDT), which posits that the types of motivation (i.e., intrinsic, integrated, identified, introjected, and external regulation) explain different reasons to exercise (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Since few studies examined the relationship between motivations and customer engagement, the current study can contribute to the engagement literature. Additionally, current research examined the moderating effect types of exercise (individual workout and group fitness) have on the relationship between motivation and engagement.

Method and Results

Data was recruited among fitness center visitors (N=456). In order to measure consumers’ engagement, the researchers adopted the SCES (Kim & Ko, 2015). In addition, the BREQ (Mullan et al., 1997) and the EMS (Li, 1999) were adapted to measure motivation. The results of CFA indicated that the items were reliable in measuring the constructs.

A multi-group SEM was conducted using AMOS to examine moderating effects of types of exercise. The results indicated that Identified Regulation (individual = .55; group = .34), Integrated Regulation (individual: $\beta = .36$; group: $\beta = .39$), and Intrinsic Motivation (individual: $\beta = .67$; group: $\beta = .73$) were significant for both individual and group fitness. The Introjected Regulation was only significant for group fitness participants ($\beta = .24$). Whereas, External Regulation was not significant in either class of participants.

Discussion

The results of the multi-group SEM suggested that intrinsic motivation was the most important factor in predicting engagement for both individual and group fitness. This result indicated that although exercise participants start for various reasons (e.g., lose weight, better health), they will not engaged in exercise without enjoyment (i.e., intrinsic motivation).

Identified Regulation was a significant predictor of engagement in both individual and group fitness participants. Interestingly, Identified Regulation played a more important role in individual workout participants’ engagement ($\beta = .55$) than group fitness ($\beta = .34$). This result shows that when exercisers realize the importance of exercise, they endure the boring and painful activity and invest their time and energy. According to this result, fitness managers should provide useful information about the value of exercise to their consumers.

Introjected Regulation was the only significant factor in group fitness participants. In contrast to individual workout participants, group fitness participants may feel social pressure to attend group session due to social interaction with instructor and other participants. Therefore, managers of group sessions should build good relationships with consumers to provide peer pressure to attend sessions.