

# Identification of Factors Affecting the Selection of Women's Gyms

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## Abstract

**Background:** Gymnasiums need to identify and strengthen the factors influencing customer attraction to grow and survive. Examining and recognizing the factors that lead to attracting people to such places is important in sports management. The purpose of this study was to identify and classify the factors affecting the selection of women's gymnasium using factor analysis method.

**Methods:** The research method is applied and the main strategy of the research is a mixed-method and it was implemented in the field. The statistical population of the study includes all customers of Ardabil women's gyms. Using the Cochran's formula, the sample size was 384 people and the random sampling method was used to select the sample units. The measuring tools included interviews and questionnaires. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling for the interview and theoretical saturation was reached when the number of participants reached 12. Open coding was performed using MAXQDA12 software and a research questionnaire was developed using 44 codes. The data were analyzed by SPSS<sub>26</sub> software using Exploratory Factor Analysis test.

**Findings:** The results showed that 44 final characteristics affecting the selection of the gym were factorized into 8 factors by factor analysis and these factors explain 67% of the total variance.

**Conclusion:** Factors influencing the selection of women's gymnasiums in order of priority include Physical Evidence, process, Place, price, product, People, Promotion and Privacy.

**Keyword:** Factor Analysis, Gym, Selection, Women, Ardabil.

## Introduction

Sport is an important factor in countries' development, creation of the national union, and health improvement (Rostami et al., 2020). Participation in sports results in improved social and motor skills, increased self-esteem, and the development of a healthy and active lifestyle through various stages of people's lives (Post et al., 2018). Sports have contributed to the economy of countries in the economic sector through offering sports goods and services over the recent decade and are considered among the high-revenue industries (Mohammadi et al., 2019). Today, participation in sports and its promotion are considered in the policy-making process of many countries (Rossi et al., 2019). People become more encouraged to participate in sports as a result of the increased quality of sports arenas which will result in an increased share for sports in the household consumption basket as well as investment and income generation in the country's sports sector (Solimani et al., 2015). Sports participation is supported and monitored by sport clubs in many countries (Spaaij et al., 2019), and a considerable increase in the number of private-sector sport clubs in these countries indicates a need for responding to the demand for sports. Attention and adherence to the respective standards are necessary alongside the quantitative expansion of gyms (Solimani et al., 2015). Sports centers and organizations must spare no effort in obtaining customer satisfaction and offering them high-quality services (Jahan, 2016). High quality refers to nothing but the realization of customers' needs and wants, and a product can only be considered high quality as long as it conforms to customers' needs (Saberifar, 2018). Customers evaluate the quality of services by comparing the service offered to them to their expected levels, so understanding customers'

expectations are essential to provide superior services in terms of quality (Cossío Silva et al., 2019). Thus, providing actual and potential customers with values based on their wants and needs in the form of high-quality services is the successful solution to achieve a favorable level in the competitive market. Therefore, identification of customers' wants and needs and providing the respective services will help gyms attract a broader range of customers, improve their health by a higher level, and benefit from them in addition to making such gyms distinct from others (Alavi & Rahimzadeh, 2016). Goods and services organizations have been forced to provide more diverse goods and services with higher quality and based on customers' needs, wants, and taste over the recent years due to the increased supply and competitiveness (Fesanghari et al., 2017). Women make up half of the community. Women's participation in sports and their stable presence in sports activities is among the important issues that have concerned officials given the increasing importance of sports and physical activities in promoting women's mental and physical health which, in turn, results in future generation's health (Hosseini & Farzan, 2018). Hence, identification of the influential and important factors in attracting women to sports arenas and study of the important factors in the stability of women's participation in physical activities provide the chance to focus on women's and girls' specific opportunities and their access to such opportunities in sports and physical activities. Ehsani & Shamsipour (2005) reported the provision of abundant and quality services, the establishment of gyms in crowded areas, and taking the community's economic and livelihood status into account to be among the influential factors in attracting people especially

women to gyms. Al-Asadi (2019) demonstrated that the respective variables of facilities, costs and expenditures, social interactions of staff with customers, and suitable access to gyms are the demands of gym customers in Basra. Klasens (2020) pointed out the importance of factors such as the physical environment, the staff, the program, the social environment, and supporting services in obtaining customer satisfaction at fitness centers. Gholipour & Khatibi (2018) indicated that the factors of individual privileges, gym equipment, gym performance, coach's behavior, coach's knowledge, and familiarity with the culture and atmosphere of the club influenced market demand for women's taekwondo clubs in Ahvaz. Afthinos et al. (2005) reported that gym customers were more inclined to modern equipment and increased service quality, and employing experienced and competent instructors attracted the attention of customers. Soleimani et al. (2015) reported suitable equipment and competent coaches to be the most important criteria in favoring a gym by customers, and Lee et al. (2011) pointed out that women who played golf cared more about the quality of club services and sports equipment newness and cleanliness compared to men. Shamsaei et al. (2010) reported the skills and competence of gym coaches in the respective sports field and the use of modern bodybuilding equipment to be influential in increasing customer satisfaction. Results of Jahan's study (2016) indicated that customers considered costs, promotion, services, and the location of sport clubs to be the most important factors in choosing a gym, respectively. Alavi & Rahimzadeh (2016) classified the needs of gym customers into necessities (interior design, proximity to the place of residence, updated services), motivational needs (being

equipped with supplementary facilities), one-dimensional needs (knowledgeable instructors and responsive staff), and indifference (costs of gym services). Imanifar (2013) reported the staff, products, location, costs, and popularity to be the most influential factors in attracting customers in the field of rock-climbing, respectively. Sheikhi (2013) also reported the respective factors of staff, location, products, and equipment as the most important factor in attracting customers to field tennis sport clubs in Iran. The club industry in the country attracts a new group of entrepreneurs every year and the competition between new and old active members of the industry intensifies. Sport clubs must acquire competitive advantages against their competition so that they can meet customers' needs and expectations in the best way possible and remain in the competition. Identification of the factors influencing the selection of Sport clubs by customers could help managers and owners of sports businesses to provide and offer customers' demands. The present study was conducted aiming to identify the factors influencing the selection of women's gyms.

### **Materials and Methods**

The present study is considered among the applied studies in terms of research orientation. Besides, the present study is a descriptive survey in nature given that authors seek to collect information regarding individuals' viewpoints and opinions. The study employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, and three tools of documentation review, questionnaires, and interviews were used for data collection. The statistical population of the first stage included experts who knew women's sports. In other words, participants with the greatest information and experience in the study subject were selected

for interviews purposefully. The number of interviewees is considered complete if there is theoretical saturation. In this study, theoretical saturation was achieved by conducting 12 interviews. After the interviews were finished, collected data was openly coded (discovering conceptual ideas in data at the first level of abstraction) using MAXQDA<sub>12</sub> software. Then, the initial codes created at the qualitative stage were used to design a questionnaire with 44 items and implement the quantitative stage. This questionnaire was first revised by the author in terms of spelling, editing, fonts, layout, etc. and its visual or formal validity was investigated. The questionnaire's validity was then examined by experts in the form of two CVI and CVR forms and was handed out among 386 gym customers, and respective data was collected. The Guttman coefficient was used to examine the researcher-made questionnaire's reliability. This coefficient classifies people based on their responses and reliability was confirmed given that the lambda coefficient is over 0.60 in the respective classes. SPSS<sub>26</sub>

software was used to carry out exploratory factor analysis. KMO index and Bartlett test were used to determine whether the collected data were suitable for exploratory factor analysis. Three conditions were considered for exploratory factor analysis. The first condition was that the question must have the highest factor loading with the respective factor and the second condition is that the respective factor loading must be higher than 0.5. Convergent validity is thus confirmed, and the question's loading factor must be at least 0.3 higher when it connects to other classes so that divergent reliability is confirmed as well.

### Results

24.4% of participants were single and 75.6% were married. 55.7% of the participants were interested in exercising in the morning while 44.3% liked to exercise in the afternoon. Most of the participants (29.8%) were from the 41-50 age group. The highest frequency of the educational level among participants was attributed to bachelor's degrees (152 people, 39.4%). Table 1 demonstrates an example of the open coding used in the study.

**Table 1.** An example of open coding

Interview transcript	Code
The gym I work out at has two treadmills but we are not allowed to use them. Anyone who wants to use them must pay 10k Tomans per 15 minutes, which is costly, and most of us cannot afford it.	Convenient gym membership fee
I have been working out for over 10 years and I have mostly worked on physical training and bodybuilding while being employed. Having a good instructor is extremely important to me and the instructor must be able to guide me well and teach me movements that suit me given that I am relatively old.	Good instructor
To me, the gym environment matters the most so that it is not located in a basement and has good air conditioning.	Suitable air conditioning
One important factor that must be taken into account is the gym's heating system. Winters are quite cold in Ardabil and the gym must have a good heating system while ventilators must work in the summer to make the gym environment tolerable.	Suitable heating system

Exploratory factor analysis was used in the quantitative section to estimate and identify the main research components. To this end, the Bartlett test and KMO index were first used to ensure data adequacy for factor analysis and data reduction. Results indicated that the KMP index was 0.947 so research data could be reduced to several essential factors.

Besides, results of the Bartlett test (12047.73) were significant at the significance level smaller than 0.01 that indicates that the matrix of correlations between items is not a unit matrix and no correlation is observed between the items of one factor with another factor's items on the other hand.

**Table 2.** Results of Bartlett test and KMO index to determine the feasibility of conducting factor analysis on research data

		Bartlett test and KMO index
KMO index		0.947
	Chi-square	12047.73
Bartlett test	Degree of freedom	946
	Significance level	0.001

44 variables entered the study and eight factors remained after extraction. According to the Kaiser criterion, these eight factors are the ones with eigenvalues higher than one were considered among final factors, and those with eigenvalues smaller than one were not accounted for in sleeting factors. As Table 3

demonstrates, features with higher correlations were placed in the same group and were classified into eight main categories that explain a total of 67% of the factors influencing the selection of a gym according to customers. Table 4 indicates the classification of the variables into eight factors influencing the choice of gym according to factor analysis.

**Table 3:** the correlation matrix of items and factors after varimax rotation

items	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 competent coaches	0.066	0.144	0.102	0.163	0.171	0.707	0.039	-0.240
2 Good management	0.010	0.235	0.102	-0.161	0.075	0.728	0.019	0.272
3 competent staff	0.247	0.034	0.060	0.288	0.268	0.623	0.079	0.122
4 Preparing programs based on the athlete's needs	0.211	0.185	0.023	0.013	0.619	0.167	0.143	0.214
5 offering diverse exercise programs	0.076	0.269	0.141	-0.014	0.593	0.111	-0.014	-0.168
6 attention to the athlete's motivation and focus	0.284	0.518	0.072	0.137	0.125	0.031	0.012	0.045
7 supervising athletes' resting and sleeping schedules	0.201	0.508	0.115	-0.007	0.144	0.063	-0.011	0.072
8 supervision on athletes' diet	0.284	0.657	0.250	0.155	0.179	0.077	-0.010	0.078
9 attention to athlete's health during exercise	0.305	0.746	0.028	0.046	0.279	0.199	0.131	0.009
10 Attention to proper exercise execution	0.235	0.777	0.209	0.071	0.035	0.109	0.090	0.057
11 attention to security issues in the gym	0.309	0.772	0.150	0.128	0.103	0.171	0.081	0.029
12 proper training for instructors	0.376	0.711	0.205	0.026	0.116	0.087	0.074	0.117
13 praising athletes	0.235	0.592	0.196	0.199	0.177	0.010	0.089	0.147
14 Having a Telegram channel to inform gym members	-0.044	0.142	0.347	0.099	0.125	-0.015	0.720	-0.092
15 proper information for gym members	0.198	0.079	-0.022	0.022	0.002	0.089	0.815	0.167
16 offering nutritional consultation	0.555	0.211	0.112	0.079	0.196	0.053	0.251	0.233
17 keeping the gym clean and adherence to health	0.236	0.628	0.286	0.293	-0.121	0.023	0.189	0.194
18 Feeling secure at the gym	0.181	0.297	0.243	0.194	0.077	0.005	0.181	0.689
19 extra facilities such as a buffet	0.553	0.219	0.148	0.001	0.080	0.025	0.217	0.221
20 adherence to moral values in the gym	0.232	0.691	0.355	0.131	0.146	0.075	0.092	0.317
21 free Wi-Fi	0.699	0.287	0.176	0.206	-0.049	0.279	0.054	0.262
22 attention to social and cultural issues	0.306	0.697	0.316	0.136	-0.039	0.212	0.050	0.278
23 compatibility of the membership fee payment times	0.311	0.256	0.317	0.664	0.247	0.049	-0.050	0.215
24 cost-convenient membership fees	0.191	0.201	0.114	0.565	-0.002	0.053	0.215	-0.189
25 Offering discounts on special occasions	0.174	0.268	0.156	0.548	0.093	-0.002	0.079	0.159
26 compatibility of the gym hours with clients'	0.654	0.274	0.130	0.233	0.180	0.021	0.048	0.210
27 suitable lockers and wardrobes	0.625	0.284	0.195	0.302	0.211	0.067	0.069	0.256
28 good sound systems	0.687	0.275	0.211	0.288	0.186	-0.146	-0.066	0.133
29 providing parking spaces for clients	0.086	0.178	0.656	0.152	0.300	-0.089	0.030	0.180
30 suitable restrooms	0.553	0.195	0.206	0.067	0.103	0.069	0.052	0.144
31 standard sports flooring	0.696	0.252	0.333	0.071	0.149	-0.020	0.007	0.175
32 Standard equipment and tools	0.731	0.266	0.228	0.198	0.238	-0.048	0.049	0.231
33 Adequate facilities and equipment	0.807	0.213	0.133	0.199	0.051	0.010	0.120	0.082
34 gym proximity to the place of residence	0.275	0.102	0.622	-0.091	0.077	0.127	0.066	0.115
35 not being placed in a basement	0.041	0.146	0.526	-0.102	0.154	0.291	0.195	0.093
36 is exclusively for women	0.101	0.213	0.611	0.182	0.042	0.115	0.160	-0.020
37 adequate number of suitable shower cabins	0.696	0.288	0.229	-0.015	0.045	0.006	0.178	-0.009
38 the size of the gym	0.101	0.264	0.676	0.097	-0.012	0.062	0.189	-0.089
39 Provision of the required standard space for client	0.158	0.065	0.744	0.161	0.028	0.086	0.074	0.043
40 good lighting	0.640	0.100	0.333	0.112	0.135	0.099	0.119	-0.124
41 gym's geographical location	0.114	0.078	0.736	0.200	-0.018	0.066	-0.112	0.075
42 suitable heating system	0.784	0.280	0.158	-0.034	0.125	0.054	-0.016	-0.045
43 good fragrance	0.709	0.168	0.122	0.173	0.053	0.204	0.003	0.052
44 suitable ventilation	0.761	0.278	0.140	0.047	0.065	0.128	0.002	-0.059

**Table 4:** classification of the eight factors influencing the choice of gym according to factor analysis

Factor	Features in order	Variance explained
Physical Evidence	Adequate facilities and equipment, suitable ventilation, suitable heating system, Standard equipment and tools, good fragrance, standard sports flooring, compatibility of the gym hours with clients' free hours, adequate number of suitable shower cabins, good lighting, suitable lockers, and wardrobes, offering nutritional consultation, suitable restrooms, extra facilities such as a buffet, good sound systems, and free Wi-Fi	42.64%
Process	Attention to proper exercise execution, attention to security issues in the gym, attention to athlete's health during exercise, proper training for instructors, supervision on athletes' diet, praising athletes, attention to the athlete's motivation and focus ,supervising athletes' resting and sleeping schedules, adherence to moral values in the gem, keeping the gym clean and adherence to health issues, and attention to social and cultural issues	5.79%
Place	Provision of the required standard space for each client, gym's geographical location, providing parking spaces for clients, the size of the gym, gym proximity to the place of residence, is exclusively for women, and not being placed in a basement	4.30%
Price	Offering discounts on special occasions, cost-convenient membership fees, and compatibility of the membership fee payment times with clients' condition	3.30%
Products	Preparing programs based on the athlete's needs, offering diverse exercise programs	3.15%
people	Good management, competent coaches, competent staff	2.75%
Promotion	Having a Telegram channel to inform gym members, proper information for gym members	2.34%
Privacy	Feeling secure at the gym	2.32%

## Discussion

Results of exploratory factor analysis indicated that eight latent factors explained 67% of the variance of factors influencing the choice of a gym. These factors –in the order of importance- include Physical Evidence, Process, Place, price, products, people, Promotion, and Privacy. Results of the study regarding the first factor indicated that the combination of facility marketing could explain

42.64% of the factors contributing to the choice of gym. A review of the interview transcripts and gym customer opinions indicate that most of the women's gyms in Ardabil lack good lighting and adequate air conditioning to the extent that some athletes are faced with respiratory issues so that customers reported opening gym windows as a solution for better ventilation and suggested gym location at floors above the ground level to

solve the issue of lighting. As one of the factors contributing to the internal attractiveness of gyms, effective use of lighting could be considered to attract customers and encourage them to join the gym. Most interviewees mentioned the importance of ventilation in gyms and one pointed out that some gyms light up incense to get rid of unpleasant smells which creates an undesirable situation for athletes suffering from respiratory issues such as asthma. In this regard, the study of Hirsch on two identical pairs of Nike tennis shoes in separate examination rooms (one with purified air with no smell and the other containing a pleasant scent) indicated that 26 people out of the 31 participants preferred the shoes in the scented room. The point worth noting was that the pair of shoes in the scented room was \$10 more expensive compared to the shoe in the other room although the shoes were identical. Besides, facilities such as showers, lockers and wardrobes, suitable restrooms, and extra facilities such as buffets attract the attention of women gyms' customers as well as the presence of adequate equipment so that the customers do not have to wait in lines. In addition, standard equipment and flooring have been mentioned in the interviews, such as gyms with carpeted floors. In this regard, Khatibi & Gholipour (2018) indicated that the factors of gym equipment such as good ventilation, suitable locker rooms, clean restrooms, and large mirrors influence the demand for women's taekwondo gyms. Nazari & Andalib (2019) reported the presence of the required facilities and equipment to be influential in gym marketing. They also mentioned facilities and equipment as one of the mentally influential elements affecting customers' mentality, which could leave positive impacts on their athletic success and motivation from a mental aspect. Khosro Khavar (2016) also reported the component of facilities as the most essential mixed element in marketing to attract gym customers. Results of Saiidi et al.

(2015) also indicated that service quality and facilities are among the factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty among the customers of Mazandaran province women's gyms. Alavi & Rahimzadeh (2016) have reported gyms' equipment with extra facilities as one of the motivational needs of gym customers. Afthinos et al. (2005) reported the use of modern equipment and facilities as one of the effective ways to attract the attention of customers. Sheikhi (2013), Karimollahi et al. (2015), and Moghimi et al. (2010) have also conducted studies in this field and reported equipment and facilities to be essential for attracting gym customers' attention.

According to the results, " Process " was the second most important factor identified in the study which explained a 5.79% total variance of factors affecting the choice of gym. The process is the same path that is referred to as customer travel which results in the better user experience the easier it is. A review of interview transcripts and opinions of gym customers indicates that the presence of an instructor beside the athlete during the exercise and attention to the correct execution of exercises, attention to security issues in the gym, and attention to athlete's health during exercise is quite important. Besides, Attention to proper exercise execution, attention to security issues in the gym, attention to athlete's health during exercise, proper training for instructors, supervision on athletes' diet, praising athletes, supervising athletes' resting and sleeping schedules, adherence to moral values in the gym, keeping the gym clean and adherence to health issues, and attention to social and cultural issues could be of great significance in the choice of women's gyms. In this regard, Khatibi & Gholipour (2018) have considered the processes to be done in the club including such as learning self-defense, training quality, being sent over to belt promotion tests, and gym leisure activities, which could influence market demand. Moghimi et al. (2010) considered the process



as one of the effective factors in attracting the customers of gymnasiums. The results of this section of the present study are consistent with the results of Sajjadi et al. (2012), Moghimi et al. (2010).

In the present study, the location turned marketing mix out to explain 4.73% of the factors influencing the choice of gym. Results indicate that according to participants, women are at a disadvantage in terms of physical activity. They cannot exercise publicly as easily as men do and contrary to women, it is culturally acceptable for men to play soccer and volleyball or cycle and take part in other physical activities outside the house while women have limitations in this regard. There are even limitations in physical education classes for school girls given the presence of male teachers or houses overlooking schoolyards which makes physical education classes impractical for girls. Thus, the only place left for women to exercise is their special gyms. Athletes demand the allocation of special places for women to exercise where the standards for the space required for each athlete are adhered to and the place is large enough and, on the other hand, close to the customers' place of residence. When it comes to transportation, women can only visit gyms close to their homes since they are in charge of house affairs. Besides, the safety concerns for women highlight the importance of the proximity between houses and gyms. Proximity to the place of residence is among the "necessities" mentioned by Alavi & Rahimzadeh (2016). Naghizadeh-Baghi et al. (2021) showed that optimal location maximizes the efficiency of sports facilities and provides better services to users at a fixed cost. Regarding the location factor, Nazari & Andalib (2019) have suggested that gyms could attract more customers if they are located in places that have easy access but are less crowded and without much traffic. In their study, Rezaii et al. (2011) reported access to sports venues, the adequate distance between

sports spaces and polluted city centers, compatibility with geographical conditions, compatibility with users' needs, security considerations in sports spaces' construction and use, flexibility for multiple uses, and amenities to be significant factors influencing sports facilities' efficiency. Rezavi et al. (2012) mentioned the respective dimensions of color aesthetics, space, forms, harmony, lighting, and environment to be influential in customers' inclination toward sports arenas. Moghimi et al. (2010), Rezaei (2011), Sheikhi et al. (2013), Hosseini et al. (2013) Alavi & Rahimzadeh (2016), and Vassiliou (2014) have also mentioned the factor of place in attracting customers in their studies. The price marketing mix was the next factor that explained 3.30% of the factors in selecting a gym. Features such as offering discounts on special occasions, cost-convenient membership fees, and compatibility of the membership fee payment times with clients' conditions are among the important factors in the choice of women's gyms. Some women appear to have limitations in paying their gym membership fees that limits their presence in gyms. Besides, gyms charge extra for using gym equipment and only people with high economic power can use the equipment. Cheah et al. (2017) reported income to be influential in individuals' participation in sports and emphasized that policies such as reducing the cost of access to sports arenas or offering subsidies for participation in physical activities must be adopted to increase participation in sports. In this regard, Rawat (2019) also suggested that women's economic status influenced their participation in sports. Motamedi et al. (2009) also reported high gym membership fees to be among the most important reasons for citizens' willingness or unwillingness to participate in sports. Ehsani & Shamsipour (2005) also suggested that considering people's economic and livelihood situation, paying the fees in installments, and offering discounts when paying the tuition

were among the influential factors in attracting individuals –particularly women– to gyms. Results of this section of the present study were consistent with the results of Männikkö et al. (2020), Takhtkeshha et al. (2015), Alavi & Rahimzadeh (2016), Imanifar (2013), Sheikhi et al. (2013), Moghimi et al. (2010), and Budet (2006).

According to the present study, product marketing mix could explain 3.15% of factors influencing the choice of gym. Preparing programs based on the athlete's needs and offering diverse exercise programs are important factors in this regard. The results of this section are consistent with the results of Imanifar (2013), Sheikhi et al. (2013), and Moghimi et al. (2010).

The sixth marketing mix factor identified in the present study (human forces) explained 2.75% of the factors in the choice of gym. Features such as good coaches and management as well as competent staff are of high importance in this regard. One could infer that effective human interactions and high human skills are among the most imperative properties required for gym coaches, managers, and staff and good conduction could attract many customers. Nazari & Andalib (2019) believe that managers and coaches must have high human interaction skills to ensure the gym's success in the sports and economic fields. Soleimanu et al. (2015) reported competent coaches to be the most important factor for customers in preferring a gym over others. Skandis (2009) reported in his study that customers pay so much attention to professional certificates (coach's card) that they forget about their own goals when they see one. Results of this section of the study were consistent with those of Skandis (2009), Afthinos et al. (2005), and Lem et al. (2005).

The seventh identified factor was a Promotion, which explained 2.34% of the variance of factors influencing the choice of gym. Features such as having a Telegram channel to

inform gym members and proper information for gym members were of significance in this regard. One of the points that were quite emphasized regarding information and advertisement was the use of social media and the internet for information and advertisement. Nowadays, conventional marketing methods have changed entirely and sports organizations tend to use social media for advertisement due to features such as public access, cost-convenient advertisement, attention to customers' wants and needs and getting their feedbacks, fast information transfer, etc. (Nisar et al., 2018). Many people are active in social media and on the internet nowadays which is why using these media could impact people's choice of gym. In this regard, Keshtidar et al. (2017) reported the improvement of information programs' quality and forming an expert marketing team are effective in discovering experienced instructors and customer loyalty. They also believe that proper information will have effective impacts on reducing the issues regarding the time of service availability as well as increasing customers' information regarding the gym's responsibilities and tasks. Meanwhile, researchers have reported special attention to content marketing on the gym website to be an influential factor in regulating the desirability of the connections between gym managers and their athletic audience (Keshtidar et al., 2017). Results of this section of the study are consistent with the studies of Moghimi et al. (2010) and Sheikhi et al. (2013).

Privacy was the final factor identified in the present study which explained 2.32 of the variance of factors influencing the choice of gym. These factors which were the least important among the eight identified factors indicated the level of environmental safety for women. Sadeghipour et al. (2015) suggested that lack of trust in the safety of the sports space among customers and their families was among the challenges and opportunities of women's sports. Results of Batmani &

Sajjadzadeh (2016) also indicated that safety could influence women's participation in sports. Eventually, the following are suggested considering the results of the present study and other studies carried out in this field:

1. Provincial authorities and sports and youth general directorate must consider gender equality when distributing sports facilities.
2. Gym facilities (adequate equipment, suitable heating system, good ventilation, standard equipment, pleasant smell, standard flooring, adequate and suitable showers, working hours compatible with customers' free time, good lighting, suitable locker rooms, and wardrobes, suitable restrooms, offering diet consultations, amenities such as buffets, good sound systems, Wi-Fi) must be considered when issuing permits for women's gyms.
3. The sports and youth general directorate must devise the required plans for constructing women's gyms.
4. Given the role of gym human resources and instructors in process' marketing mix, physical education graduates who will take the necessary courses are to be employed when issuing permits.
5. The General Directorate of Physical Education must take the required controlling measures on gym membership fees to take the price marketing mix into account.

### Conclusion

Factors influencing the selection of women's gymnasiums in order of priority include Physical Evidence, process, Place, price, product, People, Promotion and Privacy.

### Disclosure

All authors declare no conflicts of interest in this work.

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