# 163 - INVESTMENT LEVEL AND PROFESSIONALS TRAINING FOCUS OF COMPANIES IN SOUTHERN RIO DE JANEIRO

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## INTRODUCTION

In competitive environments, companies are required to differentiate, in order to gain an increasingly demanding market. With this goal, professionals must acquire more knowledge, values and skills thereby aiming at better performance in their duties (BIRTH, 2003 apud CASTINHEIRA NETO, 2004).

In services companies, professional qualification is a competitiveness resource. In them, training and development (T & D) are of fundamental importance because investing in workers preparation is essential, as it optimizes work, helps to raise company's profitability and generates a differential (BORGES, 2006).

In professional training, information and knowledge are essential, because it is important to keep up to date on techniques, technologies and concepts (MEDEIROS and COSTA, s / d). Rosenbluth and Peters (2002), cited by Villaça (2005), state that investment in programs for Human Resources (HR) is the path to success, and thus professional valuation stimulates the search for knowledge, improving significantly services quality with creative, pro-active, motivated and committed to the company people.

Competitiveness in Fitness market, by demanding investment in innovation, has made quality a primary goal in this businesses, in order to improve services and customer satisfaction. This way, identifying causes of customers dissatisfaction is an opportunity to develop ideas and innovate services (FARIAS, 2006).

An important indicator of success in business management of service organizations is customers loyalty. The ability to maintain the current and attract new customers enables the company to expand its service, growing in a consistent and sustained way. This is an essential feature of modern business management in a competitive market (LIMA AND EVANGELISTA, 2004; cited by KONITZ et.al., 2006). Thus, innovation is a key factor in order to win increasingly the loyalty of its customers. The approach of the issue requires some basic definitions to be made. For that, some authors definitions will be used as reference.

## FITNESS COMPANIES AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

According to Araújo (2004), fitness means competence, coexistence and others. For Dantas and Melo (2003), cited by Araújo (2004), fitness is the state or condition of being adjusted and adaptated to individual, social, physical and psychological needs. Castinheira Neto (2004) states Fitness Company as an institution that provides to society deportive and recreational activities for profit.

Farias (2005, cited by OLIVEIRA, 2005), ranks companies that offer fitness services as: clubs, academies, stúdios and others. To achieve higher levels of quality in the provided services, and, in consequence, improve the result of business, they must seek continued improvement. The managers of fitness companies should develop an effective and criterious plan, using the assessment of responsibility to feedback the training process, correcting the noted shortcomings, so that they can obtain customers satisfaction.

For Saba (2001, cited by TAHARA; SCHWARTZ; SILVAK, 2003), the academies have become an option for the urban population, which adheres to the practice of physical exercise in order to obtain improvements in their well-being. To Novaes (1991, quoted by SABA 2001), the emergence of the first academies purpose was to meet a target audience who sought lessons from gymnastics outside clubs.

## TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

According Chiavenato (2004), training is a mean to develop organizations' workforce and it is characterized by a systematic educational learning process of knowledge, skills and competencies, with defined objectives.

An empirical study about history of training impact at workplace, prepared by Pilati and Borges - Andrade (2004), uses models to measure the outcomes of the developed training in the area of psychology, applied by Hamblin (1978) and Kirkpatrick (1976), which proposes a classification in levels of training evaluation. Based on these parameters it was proposed "a complex relationship between multiple variables in the organization and the measures of training results." In these models the phenomenon of T & D is studied from a systemic approach. This new approach, besides enriching the study of training in organizations, makes it possible to study the variables that can influence the outcome of the training program.

This study starts from the premise that training is a key aspect in the management of fitness companies, once the act of providing means to learning is seen as intentional. In the other hand, learning means "change in human behavior due to new knowledge, new skills, new attitudes, new concepts and new philosophies" (MALVEZZI 1994; cited by MEDEIROS and COSTA, s / d). Another important aspect of the study is the ethical issue implicit in the quality of professional training in these companies, in view of the Code Ethics for Physical Education Professionals, formally tied to the regulatory guidelines of the Federal Council for Physical Education-CONFEF, and instrument for the profession.

Thus, this research has as objectives: (a) determine the level of financial investment made by RJ fitness companies in programs for professional training (b) investigate the predominant focus of programs for professional training in fitness businesses in RJ; (c)compare the investment level and the predominant focus in professionals training with this market segment demands (d) study the coherence in the raise of investment level with focus in professional training.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted through the application of a questionnaire with ten objective questions, answered by owners / managers of 10 Fitness companies, on alternate days, to verify the investment and form of professional training. The criterion used in the sample selection will be choosing academies that have Training and Development programs.

Direct and descriptive research has as characteristic fetching data directly from the source by collecting data about recorded facts, using methods and tools classified as "field" (MATTOS; ROSSETO JR; BLECHER, 2004). They are researches in

which the variables control conditions change as if the search location, arising from the socio-economic level.

The descriptive research has as main objective to observe, record, analyze and describe the facts, trying to discover and relate, with precision, the consistency of the responses to the level of professional qualification and quantification of investments made by companies in training programs for their Physical Education teachers.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

It was noted in this research that the time in professional activity of the interviewees is at least 1.5 years and a maximum 34 years, with the average 13.1 years. The timing of activity in the companies where the questionnaires were completed ranged from 2 months to 25 years, with the average of 8.3 years. Among the interviewees, 40% (4) were coordinators, 40% (4) teachers and 20% (2) managers. On the first question, on the management of coordinators and teachers training, it emerged that in 10% (1) of the companies the responsibility was given to the manager, in 20% (2) it was given to the owner, in 60% ( 6) to the coordinator and in 10% (1) to the teacher. The second question, which asked who led the training, has been answered by all companies (10)that it was conducted by internal staff.

The third question, which asked about the criteria adopted for the training in relation to the skills to be developed by officials in general, was answered by only 30% (3) of the interviewees, who said that the criteria adopted by companies were based to better meet the needs of customers, including technical training and in the area of management.

In the fourth question, concerning skills addressed in these training, 100% (10) of the companies responded that sought the development of technical and ethics skills, 90% (9) added the management competence, 80% (8) added social competence and only 40% (4) added competence in the area of information. The next issue, which sought to identify skills applied predominantly to coordinators, obtained the following results: 70% (7) of the companies cited the competence of management and ethics, 50% (5) pointed to the social one, 40% (4) mentioned the technical competence and only 30% (3) made the mention of competence in the area of information.

The sixth question, which sought check the competence applied in teachers training, we got the following answers: 60% (6) of the companies mentioned that apply technical skills, ethics and management, 50% (5) added a social and 20% (2) cited the information.

The seventh question was on the frequency of coordinators training, and was answered by 90% (9) of the interviewees. Among them, 22% (2) take the frequency monthly and quarterly training of coordinators, 11% (1) adopt a frequency half and 45% (4) said they did not pre-established.

The eighth issue, asked the frequency of teachers training, obtaining the following responses: 40% (4) of the companies adopt a frequency quarterly for training of teachers, 30% (3) are monthly and the remaining 30% (3) does not take a pre-established period. The results from the third to the eighth question were under Medeiros and Costa (s / d) and Borges (2006), which correlates the technical and knowledge development of companies' professionals with a significant improvement in the quality of service provided by them.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Considering the accounting data are treated with reserve and secrecy, as the investments of the companies, and, therefore, they are not provided, this study detected the issue of financial data unavailability for analysis. How to obtain the “investment level and focus on professional training in fitness companies”, then? The conceptual model of “Fuzzy Logic” was used in order to solve this problem.

This study assumes as its hypothesis the “Fuzzy” correlation between training frequency and cost, and it assumes also that the companies use their resources with the same efficiency. Applying these criteria, a table was created correlating the training frequency and the investment level of the fitness companies.

| Correlation Table | |
|---|---|
| Investment Level | Training Frequency |
| • Excellent Level | • Fortnightly Frequency |
| • Very Good Level | • Monthly Frequency |
| • Good Level | • Quarterly Frequency |
| • Regular Level | • Semiannual Frequency |
| • Insufficient Level | • Without a Pre-set Period |

Considering the questionnaires answers as a base and applying the “Fuzzy” correlation above, it can be concluded that the following percentages of fitness companies are presented in each investment level in the training of coordinators and teachers:

| Investment Level on Professional Training of Fitness Companies | | |
|---|---|---|
| Investment Level | Coordinators Percentage (included in the levels) | Teachers Percentage (included in the levels) |
| • Excellent Level | 0% | 0% |
| • Very Good Level | 22% | 30% |
| • Good Level | 22% | 40% |
| • Regular Level | 11% | 0% |
| • Insufficient Level | 45% | 30% |

Examining the table above, it can be noticed that 45% of fitness companies present an insufficient level of investment in coordinators training and that 30% present an insufficient level of investment in teachers training. Such investment levels are strong evidence of poor planning. Otherwise, in coordinators training, the majority of the companies present very good, good, and regular investment levels. Therefore, the training of teachers presents a higher distribution than the coordinators one, what for itself is a distortion.

Still based on the questionnaires answers, it can be concluded that there are the following focuses in coordinators and teachers professional training, based in the criteria: technique, information, management, social and ethics. The subsequent percentages were obtained in each of these skills:

| Focus of the Professional Training in Fitness Companies | | |
|---|---|---|
| Training Focuses (skills) | % of coordinators (in each skill) | % of Teachers (in each skills) |
| • Technique | 40% | 60% |
| • Information | 30% | 20% |
| • Management | 70% | 60% |
| • Social | 50% | 50% |
| • Ethics | 70% | 60% |

Examining the chart above, it can be verified that the focus of the coordinators training is predominantly based on management and ethics skills. On the other hand, the focus of teachers training presents a better distribution, considering that 60% of the companies puts its focus on technique and other 60% puts its focus on management skills and an still equal percentage of 60% puts its focus on ethics. Hence, it can be remarked that a planning flaw is shown, because the teachers training presents a better distributed focus in the several skills than the coordinators training.

The coordinators task is to supervise, coordinate and guide, therefore, they must have their skills better developed in order to perform their functions of supervising, coordinating and guiding and not the contrary, *id est*, the teachers have their skills better developed than the coordinators, since the latter should guide the former and not the contrary.

So, it can be concluded that a distortion exists in the focus of the training of coordinators and teachers, since a reversal on the priorities of the skill development of one and another occurs.

Either the companies that considered the numbers of professionals satisfactory for the market demand, or the ones that did not considered it satisfactory, presented an investment level in professional training with regular frequency, specially for teachers training.

This way, it can be concluded that the continuous training of the fitness professionals is a concern of the companies, what is translated in bigger investments on preparing the professionals and that provides the raise of employees and costumers satisfaction level. Moreover, we understand that if the noted distortions were repaired, the employees and costumers satisfactions levels could be raised, with adjustments on the investment priorities in essential skills training and on the focus of the fitness companies professionals training. This measures, related to the correct targeting of the investments and adjusts on the focus of skills development, can provide the fitness companies a significant raising of their competitive advantage, resulting in high financial and business return, obtained by the raising of employees and costumers satisfaction.

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**INVESTMENT LEVEL AND PROFESSIONALS TRAINING FOCUS OF COMPANIES IN SOUTHERN RIO DE JANEIRO**

**ABSTRACT:**

This research was carried through from interviews with proprietors or managers of the Fitness Companies and had as objectives: to verify the level of financial investment of the Fitness Companies of Rio de Janeiro in programs of professional qualification; to investigate the predominant focus of the programs of professional training in Fitness Companies in Rio de Janeiro; to compare the level of investment and the predominant focus of the professional training with the demands of the market in this segment; and to study the coherence in the rising of the level of investment with focus in the professional training. It is concluded with regard to the level of investment of the companies that the training of the professors presents a higher distribution than the one of the coordinators, what by itself is a distortion. An imperfection is evidenced since the training of the professors presents a better distribution of its focus in the diverse abilities when compared with the training of the coordinators. The comparisons allow to conclude that the companies had presented a level of investment in professional training with regularity, in special for training of professors, either in the companies where they judged the professionals qualified in this area satisfactory or in the ones where they did not find satisfactory. It was observed that the continuous training of the professionals in the area of fitness is a concern of the companies, what is translated by investments in the qualification of the professionals, and propitiates the rising of the level of satisfaction of customers and employees.

KEYWORDS: Health club, Professional Qualification, Investments.

**NIVEAU D'INVESTISSEMENT ET CENTRE DE FORMATION DE PROFESSIONNELS DES COMPAGNIES DANS RIO DE JANEIRO MÉRIDIONAL**

**RESUME:**

Cette recherche a été réalisée à partir avec des propriétaires ou des directeurs des Sociétés *Fitness*, ayant comme des objectifs: vérifier le niveau d'investissement financier des Sociétés *Fitness* de Rio de Janeiro dans des programmes de qualification professionnelle; enquêter le foyer prédominant des programmes de formation professionnelle dans les Sociétés *Fitness* à Rio de Janeiro; comparer le niveau d'investissement et le foyer prédominant des formations professionnelles avec les exigences du marché dans ce segment; et étudier la cohérence dans la hausse du niveau d'investissement avec le foyer dans la formation professionnelle. Il se conclut, concernant le niveau d'investissement des sociétés, que la formation des enseignants présente une distribution supérieur à des coordinateurs, ce qui de lui-même est une déformation. Il se constate qui existe une imperfection, donc la formation des enseignants présente un foyer mieux distribué dans les diverses compétences, quand comparé avec la formation des coordinateurs. Les comparaisons permettent de conclure que les sociétés ont présenté un niveau d'investissement dans formation professionnelle avec periodicité régulière, en particulier pour formation d'enseignants, dans les sociétés qui jugeaient satisfaisants, et aussi dans lesquelles qui ne trouvaient pas satisfaisante les professionnels habilités dans ce secteur. S'est observé que la formation continue des professionnels dans le secteur de *fitness* est une préoccupation des sociétés, ce qui est traduit par des investissements dans la qualification des professionnels, et propice la hausse du niveau de satisfaction de clients et de fonctionnaires.

MOTS-CLES: Académies, Qualification Professionnelle, Investissements.

**NIVEL DE LA INVERSIÓN Y FOCO DEL ENTRENAMIENTO DE PROFESIONALES DE COMPAÑÍAS EN RÍO DE JANEIRO MERIDIONAL**

**RESUMEN:**

Esta investigación fue realizada a partir de entrevistas con propietarios de Empresas *Fitness*, teniendo como objetivos: verificar el nivel de inversión financiero de esas Empresas *Fitness* del Rio de Janeiro en programas de capacitación profesional; investigar el foco predominante de los programas de entrenamiento profesional en Empresas *Fitness* en Rio de Janeiro; comparar el nivel de inversión y el foco predominante de los entrenamientos profesionales con las demandas del mercado en ese segmento; y estudiar la coherencia en la elevación del nivel de inversión con foco en el entrenamiento profesional. En relación al nivel de inversión de las empresas, se concluye que el entrenamiento de los profesores presenta una distribución superior a de los coordinadores, o que es una distorsión. Podemos concluír que existe un fallo, pues el entrenamiento de los profesores presenta un foco mejor distribuido em las diversas competencias, cuándo comparado con el entrenamiento de los coordinadores. Las comparaciones permiten concluir que las empresas presentaron un nivel de inversión en entrenamiento profesional con periodicidad regular, especialmente para entrenamiento de profesores, tanto em las empresas que juzgaban satisfactorios, cómo en las que no creían satisfactorios los profesionales habilitados em esa área. Se ha observado que el entrenamiento continuo de los profesionales em la área de *fitness* es una preocupación de las empresas, lo que es traducido por inversiones em la capacitación de los profesionales, y propicia la elevación del nivel de satisfacción de clientes y funcionarios.

PALABRAS-LLAVE: Gimnasio, Capacitación Profesional, Inversiones.

**NIVEL DE INVESTIMENTO E FOCO DE TREINAMENTO PROFISSILONAL EM EMPRESAS FITNESS NA ZONA SUL DO RIO DE JANEIRO**

**RESUMO:**

Esta pesquisa foi realizada a partir de entrevistas com proprietários ou gestores das Empresas *Fitness*, tendo como objetivos: verificar o nível de investimento financeiro das Empresas *Fitness* do Rio de Janeiro em programas de capacitação profissional; investigar o foco predominante dos programas de treinamento profissional em Empresas *Fitness* no Rio de Janeiro; comparar o nível de investimento e o foco predominante dos treinamentos profissionais com as demandas do mercado nesse segmento; e estudar a coerência na elevação do nível de investimento com foco no treinamento profissional. Conclui-se, com relação ao nível de investimento das empresas, que o treinamento dos professores apresenta uma distribuição superior à dos coordenadores, o que por si só é uma distorção. Constata-se que existe uma falha, pois o treinamento dos professores apresenta um foco melhor distribuído nas diversas competências, quando comparado com o treinamento dos coordenadores. As comparações permitem concluir que as empresas apresentaram um nível de investimento em treinamento profissional com periodicidade regular, em especial para treinamento de professores, tanto nas empresas que julgavam satisfatórios, quanto as que não achavam satisfatórios os profissionais habilitados nesta área. Observou-se que o treinamento contínuo dos profissionais na área de *fitness* é uma preocupação das empresas, o que é traduzido por investimentos na capacitação dos profissionais, e propicia a elevação do nível de satisfação de clientes e funcionários.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Academias, Capacitação Profissional, Investimentos.