



BUSINESS IMPACTS OF CROSSFIT AFFILIATES AND THE 60+ AGE GROUP

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to investigate CrossFit Affiliate owner/ operators' insights of their fitness business as it applies to the fitness experience of people aged 60+. The objective of this study was to reveal how CrossFit may encourage older adult populations into fitness levels and improved health. The aim of the study was to investigate a unique fitness-business model to reveal fitness experience success for future wellness delivery in aging populations. A qualitative study of purposeful sampling explored the business-related experiences of affiliate owner/ operators that provide regular group exercise to 60+ age population membership. Participants from CrossFit Affiliates in Southeastern Australia (9) and Southeastern United States (3) each answered a fifteen (15) question survey. Given the lens of the study, data was analyzed using a systematic search for information to identify business themes that encourage fitness in aging populations that included the ESOMAR/ GRBN guidelines (2015), Schein (2010), and Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009) process for conducting face-to-face interviews. Braun & Clarke, Bree & Gallagher, and Maguire & Delahunt's recommendations identified for themes. A liturgical-like fitness experience including, capturing personal transformation/ social transformation/ accountability/ creativity/ purposefulness, comradery and community is beneficial to encouraging a supportive box culture that encourages aging populations to participate in CrossFit. Information from this study be used by private public sector partnerships to make a meaningful contribution to the health and wellbeing of aging populations with view to better healthcare outcomes for an aging society.

Contribution/Originality: This paper is the first logical analysis of CrossFit Affiliate owner/ operators' insights of their fitness business as it applies to the fitness experience of aging populations. This study contributes to the existing fitness literature of people 60+ through examining benefits of healthy lifestyle benefits for an aging society.

1. INTRODUCTION

CrossFit started in 2001 because the founder (Greg Glassman) saw a need in the health and wellness business and did so by addressing kinematic and metabolic fitness as it applies to a population (Love, 2020). He focused the need locally at first and did so on the premise of a grassroots movement started by cross fitters who wanted their own local CrossFit-equipped gyms, trainers, and communities (CrossFit.com, 2020; Glassman, 2002). By 2005, thirteen (13) CrossFit Affiliates were in operation. In December 2019, there were approximately 15,000 (Eastabrook, 2019) affiliates located in 142 countries (Map, 2020).

CrossFit is the largest high-intensity functional fitness training business chain in the world (Claudino, Gabbett, & Bourgeois, 2018; Eastabrook, 2019). Interestingly, research data regarding why the CrossFit Affiliate business model is so successful is sparse. To present insights into the Affiliate business model topic the authors interviewed a group of 12 CrossFit Affiliate owner operators in two (2) countries asking a range of questions about their day-to-day delivery of their business in the context of aging populations (60+).

The fundamental aim of the gym seeks to construct a loyal community using a unique fitness regimen that consists of constantly varied functional movements performed at high intensity in a group environment, across wide-ranging time and modal domains that represent personal transformation and accountability (Easter, 2018; Maneker, 2015; Partridge, Knapp, & Massengale, 2014; Thurston & Ter Kuile, 2015). Classes will be delivered with evangelical like intensity on the claims of espoused metabolic beliefs, epidemiological values, and immersion into one person's stance on experiential health and wellness (Dawson, 2015). As an investment grade entity, the gym must operate out of lockstep with others in the fitness business. The daily client fitness-experience will be hard physical labor of about sixty (60) minutes, all in the knowledge the client will pay up to six (6) times the monthly membership of other fitness venues. Each fitness class will challenge every known and accepted training technique in the fitness industry and will seek to square libertarianism with activism because of reasons linked to the corruption of health sciences which corrupted the sciences (Mackey et al., 2016).

The gym will be called a 'box'. Owner/ operators of the box will build and maintain strong client relationships to maintain the business life of the box (Beers, 2014; Glassman, 2012). The business of the box will not follow a typical business plan, instead adopting a Darwinian free market approach whose operational platform is an unremitting commitment to the search for kinematic and metabolic accuracy of functional movement, nutrition, and averting chronic disease (Clay, 2018; Gordon, 2012). And in the mix of all of that, clients will invest into a box because of its affiliation to 'Head Office,' which is a virtual fitness company located in Washington DC. Head Office will provide no standard operating procedures to you as affiliate owner and as such your CrossFit box will all be left to fail or succeed largely on its own (Cej, 2009). Affiliate box owner will be charged up to \$3000 a year for the right to be aligned to the virtual fitness company (Gomillion, 2017); and all in the knowledge that all of CrossFit's programs are available online for free (Warkentin, 2018).

The purpose of this study was to illustrate business insights of CrossFit Affiliate owner/operators with the aim of revealing why a fitness experience of explicit and applied beliefs of one person, which is left in the hands of affiliate owner/ operator/s, will encourage older adult populations to journey toward mastery of their overall wellness in the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual provinces.

2. METHODS

2.1. Participants

Participants of the study were CrossFit Affiliate owner/ operators located in Southeastern Australia (9) and South Eastern United States (3). All respondents indicated they have a 60+ age membership that represented at least 10% of the membership of their box. All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee and with the 1975 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards in 2000. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants involved in the study. The authors declare no conflicts of interest. The study was author funded.

2.2. Data Collection

A fifteen (15) question survey was developed to identify business themes that encourage fitness in aging populations. The surveys questions were developed, delivered and data recorded using:

- ESOMAR Guidelines (2015) regarding sampling quality.

- Schein (2010) Framework of espoused values and basic underlying assumptions.
- Channel signal algorithms (Stats, 2013), Reviews on CrossFit business which reported on the top issues and trends that drive CrossFit Affiliates.
- Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009) process for conducting face-to-face interviews, and Evans and Mathur (2005) suggestions for online surveys.

The survey developed for this study explored respondent insights into the business of their CrossFit box as that business impacts on their 60+ age membership. Respondent data was gathered using one-to-one face-to-face interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006); Bree and Gallagher (2016) and Maguire and Delahunt (2017) recommendations were used to identify for themes. Themes were investigated using a progression of a) familiarization with the data, b) generating data codes, c) investigating for themes, d) reviewing themes against the interview question, e) defining and naming theme, and f) producing further information to help those this study seeks to serve. Respondent information and themes for those this study seeks to serve are reported in the Results.

3. RESULTS

Results are tabled according to fifteen (15) Interview Questions. Respondent information is tabled left to right according to the following:

- Interview Question.
- Greg Glassman's viewpoint.
- Female owner/operator respondent.
- Male owner/ operator respondent.

The detailed collection of responses refers to portrayals of respondents which can be seen in Table 1.

Table-1. Collection of responses.

Interview Question	Greg Glassman's viewpoint	Female Owner/operator	Male Owner/operator
1. What is the core competency of your CrossFit box as it related to aging populations?	To offer a uniquely attractive opportunity to make other people better.	Relationships. To build people. Hard slow work – its where the miracles are. To build lasting relationships and help people become functionally better at their lives.	Culture. Box is a homey environment. Friendship. Value everyone. Hiring great personnel. Social setting - keeping community involved thus connected. Community. People come to get fit initially, then getting fit transforms to community and that's why they stay. My box has soul. When community fitness members feed off each other success results.
2. How and why do you create your CrossFit box culture to be age inclusive?	Clients are my friends	How – Arrive early to classes 30 minutes. Be contactable. Why – Checking in with people is special (valued) Have the right combination of people. Have grace with yourself. Vision - Recast vision for Community through outside of the box activity. Have a great music playlist. Celebrate things in and of the community. We provide infinite scaling options, so no one is excluded. Can't do a squat because of knee or mobility issues? No problem. Let's work on them, but this is a substitute to provide the same	Work closely with nearby businesses. You never know what you might learn. Best part of peoples' day. Walk in not smiling walk out smiling. That's important for me to make sure that a smile happens all the time. That quality of product and service is evident. I start by demonstrating 'care' that people show up to the box.

		stimulus. You do you.	
3. What is the potential energy of your CrossFit box as that energy relates to other local CrossFit boxes?	Reciprocity	Embrace reciprocal relationships such as conduct a hero WOD together. Open for growth with others. Our classes have a mixed demographic of people. The younger people often talk about how inspired they are to when they workout with people much older. CrossFit workouts are 60 minutes of intense exercise. Those under 40 get to see their future when they reach 60 or 70. I think the younger ones are encouraged by what they will be able to do with their overall wellness later in life, when observing today's older population in my gym. It's a genuine connection! Think and deliver ahead of others. Humans are getting older. Be ready for more master's athletes. Everyone encourages everyone. No cliques, all inclusive.	To adapt to the expression general physical preparedness and integrate it into the box day to day life Keep buy in costs for clients as low as possible early on – good insurance policy Not concerned about others but always happy to work with competitors. More people that shop for CrossFit the better Make things happen by asking for help from a whole bunch of people. It's about investment in a person's future, which has implications for the future of the healthcare industry. Growth in participation in the box and the box's participation in activities with other boxes. Don't think about that. If I put 100% into the people, the people recognize and respect my energy; the business sorts itself out. Don't care. We do our thing.
4. How do you go about being fun in your CrossFit box for older age groups?	No poverty of spirit	Always positive. Committed to learning intuitively. Engage intelligently. Contact personally. Always providing scaling options. Build personal relationships.	Relationships. The box is a test lab for growth, improved mindset. As a sole owner I try to be myself – start simple and small. Humor Be true to yourself It's a team atmosphere – provide everything you can to maintain that. Humor, banter, laugh. It is very important to understand why people train – what their hopes and aspirations are Inappropriate joke or two. Get to know to people personally Making everyone a winner. Celebrate successes
5. Is your CrossFit box a retail business or a philosophy?	Philosophy	Philosophy. Philosophy. Room for both (not too much retail though). Philosophy with limited retail.	There's a sweet spot for both. For my box to be at its best it has a mix. Has its own identity with some CrossFit philosophy. Philosophy... 100%. Not retail/ it's not about the point-of-sale retail money / want people to be better; to help people. I want a great community Philosophy (but retail has small part to play in the service we provide). Both
6. What are the merit badges of your CrossFit box?	Define your terms in the Knowledge that you know what you are talking about. Start with the contextualizing of personal transformation, social transformation, accountability, creativity, purposefulness, and community	Closeness to client, trust, community, competitions, creativity, be brave, take risks. Champions of life. Strength of spirit. Wellness Health Fun Passion / Business mindedness. CrossFit is not a hobby. Be results driven. Act on client cues through their stories. Be committed to better because the client is. Offer an alternate way of living – age is not the barrier.	Perceptions, culture, experience, keep the box lean, clean – present it well Keep the box as visual as possible Warmth, encouraging, no arseholes (assholes), getting a good workout in, having a good time. Community/ Community/ Community... Welcome mat, leave the gym happy, good experience, golden rule, staying fresh, physically safe, look to be better, want feedback, engaged conversation. Community. Friendliness. These two drives everything for me. Quality. Making the box work. Inclusive. Family. Welcoming

		Be better at life!	
7. Why are CrossFit's metric impacts good for your CrossFit box?	Healing and wellness of clients	To see improvement, one needs a pre/post measure. See development. Experience self-discovery. Share success. Measure how your box breaks accepted beliefs of clients. Act on those breaks. Reach milestones. Make a big deal when they are reached. Provides measurable feedback which motivates the member.	Measurable results are observable and repeatable. Clients and coaches are driven by results It helps people chase a new character inside of them Showing up and being engaged – it's about the connection and trying to make sure that everyone knows they are worthy of connection (i.e., there is no shame/ have to courage to be imperfect/ embrace their vulnerability, so we can belong) Must have indicators of improvement. Potential of the training program = results To see improvement. Bear witness to a person's transformations – huge buzz for everyone to celebrate. Measure success (often) to take gym in right direction. Introduces me as owner to conversion elements.
8. What are the key non-metrics of your CrossFit box?	Mood and confidence of all that use the box	Happiness, trust, discourse (good and bad) being early, being neat. Create great citizens. When you sweat with people you bond with people. Be mindful of young at heart – its powerful. Use every mechanism to be a commentary of change. Present clients with learning curves every single class. Building a sense of belonging. Family feel.	Relationships. Display cool stuff in your box Cohesion. Meet and greet all the time. Fun, it rules! Establishing new friendships. Tangible achievements are evident. Celebrating the evidence. Building a sense of Belonging, Confidence to believe in 'I'm important' Community impacts. Friendships. Culture - must stay ahead of the mood
9. Why is your CrossFit box accepted by 60+ age bracket in the community?	Core values as demonstrated through its mission	Known for my competition ability. Experienced given I'm an early adopter of CrossFit. Seen as a leader and authority in CrossFit. My attention to detail. The 1% 's are key. The box is a guide to goodness. Know how and why you articulate the information you have to offer. Accepted as a leader in health and fitness. CrossFit is just a name in our box. We are hyper focused on coaching, less on competition.	We care about client well being Known for safety, simplicity in structure Participates in assorted events and known for being supportive of all Having fun together. Known to be friendly. Known for wanting the best for people wellness. Know because I want to help. Don't really think about it. My aim is to make the box a point of common interest for all, which seems to work! It's a day to day lived experience
10. Why is your box an investment grade entity for older people?	CrossFit has an unremitting commitment to the message of metabolic truth. The stimulus of CrossFit is knowing how to leverage functional movement Health and wealth through efficacy, simplicity to make the world a better place	Offering a lifestyle shift, improve people's confidence, monitor for fast improvement in skill, mobility and strength; part of something special. It's a space to find out what you want in your life. People have roles in the box – must be observed. Demonstrate your rewriting of the record books through evidence-based practice. Provide confidence for aging and bettering their movement patterns.	Support from the staff to client. Capacity to infect people to be better Effective programming Inclusive. BE an Affiliate! You'll get something in return – the ROI is great! Fitness. This affiliate invests into peoples' desire to belong to something bigger than themselves. Measure growth. Growth is our goal
11. What's the best marketing campaign of your CrossFit box to	Word of Mouth	Word of mouth. Prosper where you are planted – show the world that your box is together (as one).	Word of Mouth. Supply and demand. Remember having to close off memberships due to being at capacity.

attract older age people?		Referrals. Word of mouth. Because of results of people and the relationships that are established. Word of mouth and targeted social media.	So weird, the box never experienced such a rush on membership as when it closed to new membership. My box community is my living marketing campaign. Social media and word of mouth because of high quality coaches. Social Media. Happy clients. Word of mouth. Look after the people in your business and they do all the marketing. Stories, testimonials captured in conversation and shared in social media
12. Is your CrossFit box a perfect venue to reduce chronic disease?	Yes. It's an environment that is to be a sanctuary from the corruption of people's health	I'd hope so! The box is a 'way of being', so yes, it is perfect Yes. 100% yes.	100% Yes. Absolutely! I'd like to think so. Yes! Without doubt. Yes - 100%
13. Is your CrossFit box a trojan horse for delivering wellness to older age people?	Yes. There's a vexing problem in society called chronic disease. Vexed because of the corruption of the health sciences. The CrossFit box is a place to fight chronic disease. It a place to square libertarianism with activism for the sake of people's wellness.	Yes, but a subtle sell that's incorporated in every class offered Not sure. Encourage and elevate people in the best way you can for their sake. If that's trojan horsing then, yes. Yes. Absolutely.	100%. Never thought it about. But yeah, I guess it is. Yes. We talk about wellness, though not overly so. Discussion about wellness are spontaneous and we foster that discussion in a non-intrusive manner. Yes. Emotional wellness is the most important element because we've learned people like a good time. Not sure. But people get healthy at my box. Of course. Wellness at this Affiliate is offered on many levels. Yes.
14. Why is your CrossFit box an exemplar of best practice?	Spontaneous community, trains people for life, values comradery.	Care about the people what's best for them through their fitness. To always be on the lookout for something unique in the "metabolics" and kinematics of CrossFit. Clients become a new identity. We actively seek out educational opportunities to better our services. Our success is measured in the satisfaction of our members.	Capacity to adapt. Yes, because I'm organized and I don't underspend when equipment quality is key. Arrive early leave late. Good coaches = good people. I give it my best. Mindful, the box is a personification of my ability – my identity. Attention to detail in all aspects of the daily life of box. We adapt to evolve the business. (Want to learn - continually)
15. Do you have other comments about the business of CrossFit and the success of your CrossFit box as it applies to older age people?	There's an ongoing Litmus test for all Affiliates – ask, why and how does my CrossFit box serve the end-user better?	Don't dilute classes. I like virtuosity in a box. Using less (not more) is best. Give the client time to learn (avoid rushing). Box owners with a High IQ in soft skills do well in the CrossFit business. Get certified/ encourage others to get certified. Go into every day with a take over the world mind set. Be accepting – too ebb & toil will help you walk forward in your purpose. Don't look the other way when things start to diverge. Example: Your coaches will 'grow' and will want to open a box. Embrace it. Don't take things personally. Box split is real. Stay professional – as hard as it can be sometimes. Read your reviews! Act on them	Must have focus, on what needs to be done. Community focus and competition mix is useful but can stifle things if not well managed. Understanding what's going right now, spontaneously adaptive, overcoming self-doubt is crucial. Trainers create the weather in the box. Etiquette in the box is the foundation of a great workout for everyone. Above all, the word vulnerability must be allowed to occur because it's a doorway to true growth. Fosters sensible humor, gives people a pathway to share experiences. Must have flexibility to read your clients for good relationships Start small. Don't recommend taking used toys for your day care.

		<p>where necessary. Welcome drop ins. Give them a quick mention at the start of class. Mention where they are from. I see a lot of isolation, in particular older men. Using my box to narrow a wide seam of disconnection and loneliness is something I work hard at. Always welcome everyone with the same enthusiasm. Listen to your members. They are the heart- beat of your business.</p>	<p>Two bathrooms as a minimum. Organize your storage. I like to have a thermostat on display. Not sure what it does in real terms... but no-one complains. Work 'on' the business and try to not get working to 'in' the business If you have a young family beware of the pull of CrossFit. There's always something that needs to be done. Affiliates must evolve! The fundamentals of the fitness remain a constant, but communities change and a good box will change with its community. Communities should change and as such the box is in a position to change it (not reaching out not branching out you won't see change). Live it breathe it Live the community. Help-out other people. Share in the good and the and the bad. "Don't be shit or be a shit. Be authentic. Don't underestimate what people need. If you offer truth and they get to know that you are speaking the truth, then people will support the box. It's not about selling as much as it's all about value and feeling valued". Evolve the box setting to something more premium. More Governance from head office in premium would be welcomed by affiliates Push clients a little harder in workouts. My box has a strong social element to it and members leave 40% on the floor. I want to see them work 100% and be social before and after the WOD. Many (not all) but many people's minds function according to the capacity of other body parts. If people leave my classes happy then What I did that day was right.</p>
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Owner/operators of affiliates participated in a fifteen (15) question survey that was designed to investigate for wellness themes of aging populations thus contributing to the business success of affiliates. According to the respondents' the following are identified:

- A multifaceted mix of client-perceived quality of product/service, customer service, value, innovation, and liturgy are intertwined staples of a successful box that may engage aging populations into fitness regimen.
- Offering authentic, meaningful transformative fitness experiences may lead to expanding the communities and mutual support of aging participants because of frequency in gathering to train/ exercise.
- Embracing and encouraging the first rule of CrossFit is to talk about CrossFit to promote social connectedness across generations.
- Offer a sense of security in the owner operator's exercise community, which is derived from participation in scale-able fitness classes (to fit all participants).
- Creating new memories is a constant of daily affiliate operations.
- That the affiliate operates as a philosophy (not point of sale retail) of cognitive and intuitive training for life experiences.
- The affiliate is a perfect venue to reduce chronic disease.

- The affiliate is a known destination for daily routine that provides functional independence through effecting happiness, maintained self-esteem, positive mood, overall physical, social, emotional, and intellectual wellness.

4. DISCUSSION

In considering the views expressed by respondents the findings provide insight into affiliate success themes for aging populations such as personal transformation/ social transformation/accountability/ creativity/ purposefulness and have been identified through the lens of the study's methodology.

Question 1 asked respondents to identify what is at the core of their thinking around the day-to-day business of running their Affiliate as it relates to ageing populations. The word "core" didn't denote singularity thinking as such singleness thinking relates to an Affiliate.

Respondent data suggests a box is multifaceted and that quality of product/service, customer service, value for investment, innovation, and liturgy are intertwined essentials of a successful box. Multifaceted elements may seem overwhelming at first but if affiliates can take a genuine collaboration approach to deliver valid learning experiences in the box the immediate and longer-term needs of those the box is attempting to help will be met. A core competency is "key abilities or strengths that a company has developed that give it a competitive advantage over its peers and contribute to its long-term success. It's suggested that core competencies are difficult for competing businesses to duplicate.

Question 2 asked respondents to reflect on methods of inculcating their box-culture. Respondents discussed things that can build an environment of encouragement and positiveness. Providing a meaningful experience of belonging to create a sustainable sense of community. "A good playlist to work out to" and "being friendly and checking in on people to show you care" have merit according to respondents. CrossFit box culture is built by creating a sense of unity through shared experiences and a common goal such as health and fitness (Bailey, Benson, & Bruner, 2017). A commitment to promoting inclusivity with a high degree of structure that is held together by communal values, personal enjoyment, and constantly challenging oneself are creation elements of CrossFit box culture.

Question 3 asked respondents about relationships with geographically nearby competing affiliates. Respondent views varied from notions of embracing reciprocity opportunities with other affiliates to not thinking about other affiliates that are in competition with them, focusing on their points of difference as a provider of CrossFit. If its barriers that affiliates want to overcome, then offer relationship building in a boundaryless sense of belonging to something much bigger than oneself is a theme consistent with respondents. One respondent argued that the potential energy of belonging is embedded in the principle of reciprocity, which should be built on trust. Another respondent said, "everyone encourages everyone. No cliques, all inclusive". "Our classes have a mixed demographic of people. The younger people often talk about how inspired they are to when they workout with people much older. CrossFit workouts are 60 minutes of intense exercise. Those under 40 get to see their future when they reach 60 or 70. I think the younger ones are encouraged by what they will be able to do with their overall wellness later in life, when observing today's older population in my gym. It's a genuine connection!" CrossFit boxes that offer incentives / opportunities to customers, may arouse trust which may result in good prospects for future business (Wolfe, 2019).

Question 4 asked respondents how they go about being fun in their affiliate. Respondent erred on the side of their espoused beliefs and values as they relate to being fun. Fun is embedded in making a CrossFit work-out more enjoyable. But fun doesn't end when the work-out ends. Creating new memories is an ongoing constant for affiliate owners. Customers choose between the memories of experiences (Kahneman, 2011). In other words, memories become glorified and only the best things get remembered (Shaw, 2013). Considering the postulations of Kahneman (2011) and Shaw (2013) if CrossFit customers memories are subject to glorification, then it is up to the affiliate to

create positive memories for our customers using as a “catchy hook” such as fun in the box but also promoting fun things away from the Box.

Question 5 sought to determine if respondents thought their affiliate was ‘a point-of-sale retail business’ (i.e., as in customer/ fee-for-service service, only) or an attitude of life-purpose with ongoing eureka moments, or both. The consensus respondent view was their CrossFit business is a philosophy. Affiliate owners seek to evolve their box around the notion of lifestyle becoming supplanted by a workout style for aging populations. The box as a cash transaction physical venue alone is not fulfilling because it doesn’t offer what cross fitters seek, which is a mix of physical, social, emotional and intellectual engagement with others. Cross fitters seek high intensity thrills, bond-building experiences and feelings of control inside the box (Crompton, Cohen, & Pouryousefi, 2016). Waring and Waring, 2009 argue that exercise is a communal embedded reflection and method of conforming to professional ideals – competitiveness, motivation, success – through gym membership and the development of the professional organization. Retail of the Box is a by-product.

Question 6 asked respondents to identify those things that have merit in their affiliate. Respondent discourse was varied but suggests merit badges are virtuous in that they are authentic, meaningful, and transformative. Building and sustaining a culture of authenticity, meaningfulness and transformation has merit for affiliate success in CrossFit. Lencioni (2016) and Thurston and Ter Kuile (2015) suggest that the journey to self-mastery lies in the virtues of complementary merit badges such as personal and social transformation, and purposeful transformation. Respondents suggest that CrossFit offers an alternative way of living, where age is not a barrier, and the community is where the value of the business is assembled and sustained.

Question 7 sought to glean understanding of why measurable things that occur in the box are good for an affiliate’s success. One respondent suggests that “seeing, sharing, and celebrating are important in the daily narrative of CrossFit boxes. Why? To tell a story”! Seeing, sharing celebrating are by default emotionally charged scenes. These “feel great” scenes are ones for affiliates to capture. A good-story narrative is cognitively and emotionally engaging when presented in a client self-discovery auditory format. Unscripted collective engagement stimulus are powerful motivators of people. An affiliate that serves the client is one that can capture successes in and of its community and articulates connection of that success to them. To articulate successes in a brief stated coherently connected manner is absorbed by clients (Richardson et al., 2018).

Question 8 asked respondents to identify important non-measurable aspects of their CrossFit box. The respondent views are responses around the notion of nuance such as young at heart, happiness, pride in self, and feeling of belonging. At its lowest common denominator, the affiliate’s business membership numbers matter but true business success may be found in how the day-to-day operation of a box is nuanced. McCleod (2016) argues in support of W. Edwards Deming argument “it is wrong to suppose that if you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it – a costly myth”. Appraising by numbers alone will never make an organization great, because it is the qualitative (non-numerical) elements of performance that achieve greatness. The formula for a successful CrossFit gym is trusted leadership & client-accepted knowledgeable coaching. However, any programming, without integration of community, is a road to the affiliate’s flatlining (McCarty, 2017).

Question 9 aimed to identify respondent understandings of what’s required for a box to attain acceptance by a CrossFit community. The recurrent argument from respondents was expressed as, the views you have on your affiliate must become mainstream and, the way to do this is through talking with one another in your community. Community acceptance is evidenced by the successes it enjoys in affiliates. The supposition is posed... CrossFit is not for everyone, it’s for anyone; so, how are we as a community going to help others suggested one respondent? The sense of community is endlessly striking in a population. The endlessness could mean striving for a culture of wellness. The vast majority of customers are looking for something they associate with professionalism (Gavett, 2014). CrossFit’s professionalism lies in the veracity of the mission of a message of kinematics and “metabolics”. Such a message is a communication that may be unique to CrossFit.

Question 10 asked respondents to explain why people invest in their affiliate. Explanations of situational realizations drive connected understanding of people's strengths so they can explore their future fitness potential. What is evident in responses is connection to something more. Offering a powerful intentional fitness experience may be part of the technique to build and maintain an investment grade entity. It's also argued that an intentioned fitness experience should a cognitive encounter. An encounter that is simultaneously integrated into client's intellectual domains, which can be cause for interactions and discourse of observing, listening, thinking, and doing exercise as a group. Seeking to offer cognitive fitness classes to better equip people to make decisions, solve problems, and deal with stress and change in their lives encourages confidence of self ([The Psychology of Fitness, 2010](#)).

Question 11 asked respondents to identify the best way they market their affiliate to the broader community. Word of mouth and use of social media were identified as best ways to reach out to people. Word of mouth and social media are inexpensive and quick and integrate into the 21st century world of work. Communicating powerful emotions is a compass that points affiliates to tell their customers about what the life of the affiliate, and in doing so attracts those that support your values ([Hum, 2015](#)). As one respondent said "look after the people in your business and they do all the marketing. My box never experienced such a rush on membership as when it closed to new membership."

Question 12 sought to reveal respondents' opinion on their box as a venue for reducing chronic disease. Every respondent said "yes". The box is a venue to reduce chronic disease because it seeks prevention: prevention is better than a cure ([Sheill, Guinan, Peat, & Hussey, 2018](#)). As a prevention first venue then what does this logic mean for the affiliate business? Greg Glassman argues that the box offers an environment that is to be a sanctuary from the corruption of people's health. His argument may have worth when one considers that twenty to forty (40) percent of people in the United States alone will die from chronic disease. Nine (9) in ten (10) people are dying from chronic disease in Australia ([World Health Organization, 2018](#)). It's anticipated that if no significant change in behavior occurs, chronic disease will continue to increase ([Australian Stroke Foundation, 2018](#); [World Health Organization, 2018](#)), the impact of health care systems is worrying.

Question 13 sought to opinion about the box as a trojan horse for educating people on their wellness. The common answer that resulted from the question was "yes". Respondents indicated that wellness education should be nurtured. Nurtured, in that knowledge of wellness is shared & learned workouts of the day (WOD). Encouraging informal conversation about issues of wellness before and after WODs is encouraged. A respondent said, the use of one to one or small group chat during the warmup and warm downs is powerful. Powerful because great ideas come to light in brief moments of emphasized discourse. Great ideas are championed by the owner/coaches. The box is the collective location to make the idea happen, because the membership brings the energy. It a place to square libertarianism with activism for the sake of people's wellness ([Glassman, 2002](#); [Glassman, 2009](#); [Glassman, 2012](#); [Glassman, 2020](#)). CrossFit may be part of a tribe? [Godin \(2008\)](#) argues that tribes make our lives better and leading in a tribe is the best life of all. If CrossFit membership is a tribe, then it may not be unreasonable to suggest that belonging to a tribe that coalesces in a business environment on a day-to-day basis can impart aspiration among members, which may stimulate collaborative instincts about wellness.

Question 14 wanted to identify respondents view on best practice in their affiliate. An response was "the box is a personification of my ability - my identity, because its training for life'. [Glassman \(2009\)](#) argues that CrossFit best practice depends on the individual box! If CrossFit is 'training for life' then people may research the relationship between force/distance/ time in fitness, seek understanding from the relationship, and convert into elements of affiliate best practice. What we want to do is develop not an exercise science per se, but a technology of advancing human performance ([Glassman, 2009](#)). Affiliates should desire for their clients to become a new identity because such want typically generates new customers due to the experience of existing ones.

Question 15 was a catch-all posed to give respondents the opportunity to discuss other things about their affiliates, aging populations and maintaining a profitable CrossFit business. According to Glassman (2020) and the on-going litmus test for all affiliates is for owner / operators to ask themselves why and how their box serves the end user better. Respondents spoke of the isolation, disconnectedness and loneliness displayed by older populations using the box, and that affiliates intent to design their fitness classes that integrate everyone. Strategies such as group pre-workout meetings and asking people to help with demonstrating a WOD technique are common. Less common was being social before (and after the WOD) because being social aims to gently traverse gender and age boundaries to a shared encouraging fitness experience. One respondent said, “affiliates must evolve beyond social bias norms! The fundamentals of the fitness experiences remain a constant so the communities can change; a good box will change with its community. Communities should change and as such the box is able to change it. If the box is not reaching out not branching out you will not see change for the betterment of all, because idea is, simply put, exercising by a group of people that are seeking a healthier life”. So, if CrossFit is one example of training for life, then an affiliate may investigate the relationship between forces, distances, and times as it applies to overall wellness of its clients. This, the box should be a place to experience hard physical labor in an otherwise sedentary and increasingly technologized society; a place that encourages all genders, ages, and abilities to participate equally as long as one pays for a membership; and a hyper-competitive place that inadvertently leads to wild and untamed bodily movements (Crockett, 2015), which aim overcome self-doubt and have fun through shared behavior experiences.

Respondents have provided insights into their affiliate goals by discussing the hopes and aspirations for their clients according to the questions posed. The rich data revealed much insight into CrossFit people and their experiential life as owner operators of a for-profit business. Discussions around things like staying relevant, descriptions of best practices and community branding were evident. Interestingly, what was not discussed was the pressures of making a profit. It may be that owner operators capture the outer world of clients as most important to the inner world of the box. It may be that a Darwinian free market approach to mission of averting chronic disease by motivated people who seem to compete against themselves. An in the box approach seems underpinned by things like mood dependency, social patterning, knowing markets, shared emotional connection, comradery and social support.

The day-to-day operation of the affiliate is mood dependent. The logic being that when the right emotion is displayed in the box such energy contributes to the care and feeding of clientele which seems to translate into the Affiliate owner operator because of client well-being. A partnership to further the fitness experience and increase opportunities for dialogue through common-ground association. Social patterning of box relationships are key elements to striving for the health and wellness culture of an affiliate. The importance of the social component of CrossFit cannot be underestimated. Such an approach exhorts aging clients to engage in better exercise habits, and such engagement encourages others of a similar demographic to become involved.

Markets for CrossFit are knowable. CrossFit is promoted as not for everyone but is for anyone. Third person marketing works best for things like populations engagement and immersion in training content daily. The shared emotional connection of a) owner/ operator of the affiliate, and b) clientele, seems to be the most salient influencer of older population membership retention. Affiliates that seek out and share experiences + build a strong sense of community through championing their ideas that benefits all of society: use the affiliate as a crucible of ideas and enjoyment. Everyone brings the energy because it's a way to give attention to a social picture using assimilation and inclusion, which is an important dimension of community engagement for older populations (e.g., group support due to the affiliate). Group support of older adults is important to address by affiliate owner/ operators because of the impact of stressful life events such as retirement, illness, and loneliness due to death of family and friends. A targeted mix of social /exercise interventions offered by affiliates may help to lessen life event impacts.

Affiliates seem to have a box-culture that is built on comradery and social support. The driver of comradery across generations is the Affiliate's owner/ operator. There is empowerment in being part of group because a challenging exercise regime transitions to something deeply connected to others. Affiliates have impact and reach in the community because of the concepts espoused through box culture such as intergenerational integration. Impact and reach are defined those uniquely attractive opportunities presented for the benefit of other people such as the aging population.

It is recommended that the information from this study be used by fitness industry personnel to make a meaningful contribution to the health and wellbeing of aging populations, and that private public sector partnerships be progressed to help prevent lifestyle related diseases in vulnerable populations thus aiming to ease the burden of healthcare costs in an aging society.

Vulnerable people may overly impact costs of care such as health care and other publicly funded services like prison systems and other social agencies. Organizations like CrossFit and their owner/ operators can, using functional fitness as the intervention, provide an exercise experience that embodies health and wellness to support daily life. Respondents spoke of vulnerable people that become CrossFit athletes such as people suffering from a chronic disease, depression, recidivists who have transformed their overall wellness. CrossFit participation may have the capacity motivate thus transform the lives of people that have been under strain for too long.

To obtain data about vulnerable people that are no longer suffering chronic disease, depression, recidivism, because of their participation in an exercise program may amplify interest from governments interested in better benefits for the publics' health.

5. CONCLUSIONS

CrossFit Affiliate owner/operators' perceptions of their fitness business as it applies to the fitness experience of people aged 60+ that are members of their affiliate has been presented. Data of how a fitness experience of explicit and applied beliefs of one person, which left in the hands of Affiliate owners, might support the wellness of aging populations are displayed.

Regular intergenerational group exercise opportunities offered by affiliates contributes to physical, mental, and social health and well-being of older populations. Owner/ operators that can socially connect their populations increase the opportunity for communication beyond the exercise experience to include social outings and mutual support.

As life expectancy increases, systems to care for older people places a great burden on society. Comorbidity issues like sedentary behavior, physical and cognitive disabilities, mental and social health problems increase with age increases. Therefore, health promotion in older adults is an important public health priority and exercise organizations can be a useful intervention to help reduce the liability linked to matters of economic development, threats to international security, and unacted impacts on global health. A uniformity to wellness delivery may become a basis for health in aging populations. Such opportunity may bring about expanding communities (beyond geographical and generational boundaries) through social connectedness and community cohesion to form a part of a road map used to strengthen populations.

Future investigation on topics such as innovation in fitness organizations that seeks to transform populations to outcomes linked with active citizenship, social inclusion, and community interconnection through a social approach to health programs is encouraged. A further study investigating the impacts and experiences of CrossFit on its clients may have merit.

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