



REPS UAE 2019 WORKING IN FITNESS SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The REPs UAE Working in Fitness Survey has been designed to be a key source of information on the fitness industry in the United Arab Emirates. This is the first Working in Fitness survey carried out by REPs UAE and it will be repeated in future years to explore trends in employment patterns, pay, training issues and career paths.

The objectives of the research were to explore characteristics and tendencies of the UAE fitness workforce related to employment and professional development, and set a baseline for research in future years.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

The survey was promoted to all people working in the UAE fitness industry in any role. The sample of fitness professionals who completed the survey had a majority of male respondents with 57% male and 43% female. The majority (65.4%) are located in Dubai, with a further 28.1% working mostly in Abu Dhabi. A total of 60 different nationalities are represented in the sample of fitness professionals showing the truly international nature of the UAE fitness industry.

Personal trainer is the most represented job title among the sample (57.1%). A majority of respondents (56.1%) are employed full time in the fitness industry, with just over a third (36.7%) employed on a freelance/ self-employed basis. Survey respondents are most likely to work at a private gym or studio (37.5%) or else at chains of private fitness clubs (20.6%) or private homes (13.1%).

96% of respondents think the regulation of fitness trainers is important to the development of the fitness industry in the UAE, providing an overwhelming endorsement of the work of REPs in industry regulation.

HOURS AND PAY

The average number of hours worked in the fitness industry per week for all respondents is 31.33 hours. Over 10% of respondents work more than 60 hours per week while 20% work 9 hours a week or less. This evidence suggests the fitness industry is flexible enough to accommodate different working patterns where some can work a large number of hours perhaps in an attempt to generate as much revenue as possible, while others can work part time or on a freelance basis and chose lower hours to fit individual circumstances and the specific stage in their life or career.

For personal trainers the average number of hours per week training clients is 25.30.

The two most common modes of payment for fitness professionals are monthly salary and payment per hour and this was confirmed in the survey sample.

For those paid by the hour average pay is 218.62 AED per hour. It is more common for females to be paid by the hour than males, perhaps due to the prevalence of females as fitness class instructors (group fitness, Pilates, Yoga). There is a small gender pay gap in the average hourly pay of males and females with males earning on average slightly more per hour.

The overall average monthly salary for respondents paid monthly is 5380 AED and for those paid monthly there is no gender pay difference seen in the results.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Nearly two thirds of respondents took their main fitness qualification in the UAE, showing demand for entry level qualifications.

Respondents reported a significant amount of professional development - 58.2% reported having done more than 3 days and 23.9% reporting having done more than 10 days in the past year. The average spend on training and development across all respondents was 3290 AED, however only 6.6% of respondents reported that their organisation pays for their training and development.

CAREER PATHS

The survey showed an experienced workforce in the UAE fitness industry and also that fitness professionals are choosing to stay in the UAE fitness industry for a large part of their career.

The most common factor for joining the fitness industry was a passion for fitness followed by wanting to help other people.

The most likely reason for fitness professionals potentially leaving the industry is low pay compared to other industries. This was followed by other personal reasons, lack of work/ new clients, and rising costs.

FITNESS TRENDS

A large majority of fitness professionals work with older adults and children, nearly half work with clients with physical disabilities and pre-and post natal clients. This has implications for core fitness qualifications and CPD training.

A vast majority of respondents also work with people with lower back pain and with obesity/ diabetes, also highlighting a training need in these areas.

THE TOP FIVE RANKED FITNESS TRENDS AMONG RESPONDENTS

1. HIGH-INTENSITY INTERVAL TRAINING (HIIT)
2. PERSONAL TRAINING
3. GROUP TRAINING
4. FUNCTIONAL FITNESS TRAINING
5. BODYWEIGHT TRAINING

(CHOSEN FROM ACSM WORLDWIDE FITNESS TRENDS SURVEY OPTIONS)

CONCLUSION

The results of the REPs UAE Working in Fitness Survey 2019 show a diverse, hard-working and flexible workforce serving the fitness and wellness needs of the UAE. REPs UAE looks forward to working with partners to take any actions they feel relevant after considering these results and continuing to monitor trends in the UAE fitness industry through future research activities.