



Perceptions of Fitness Enthusiasts on the Role of Music in Enhancing Exercise Motivation

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine fitness enthusiasts' perceptions regarding the role of music in enhancing exercise motivation during gym-based physical activity. The study employed a quantitative descriptive design using a survey method. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale distributed to 50 fitness enthusiasts who routinely exercised in several fitness centers in Cirebon. The questionnaire measured participants' perceptions regarding the influence of music on exercise motivation, focus, enjoyment, workout intensity, and exercise consistency. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The findings showed that all questionnaire items obtained mean scores ranging from 3.92 to 4.34, indicating high to very high perception categories. The highest mean score was found in the statement that music makes exercise sessions more enjoyable ($M = 4.34$), followed by the statement that participants enjoy workouts more while listening to music ($M = 4.26$). Overall, respondents positively perceived music as an important factor supporting exercise motivation, concentration, enjoyment, workout consistency, and perceived exercise performance. These findings suggest that music may serve as an effective psychological support strategy in fitness activities.

Keywords: music; exercise motivation; fitness; gym; fitness enthusiasts

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A. Introduction

Physical exercise is an important activity for maintaining and improving physical fitness and overall health. Exercise consists of planned, structured, and repetitive body movements aimed at improving or maintaining physical condition. In recent years, public awareness regarding healthy lifestyles and physical fitness has increased significantly, resulting in the growing popularity of gym-based exercise activities. Regular physical exercise contributes positively to muscle strength, cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, and psychological well-being (Ginting et al., 2025).

Fitness centers have become popular places for engaging in physical exercise because they provide various facilities and exercise equipment that support strength training, cardiovascular exercise, and flexibility development. According to Nanang and Pasharibu (2021), gym-based exercise is widely preferred because it enables individuals to improve physical fitness through structured training using specialized exercise equipment. In addition, participation in exercise activities may also be influenced by individuals' attachment to particular places and environments that support their motivation to engage in physical activity (Kulczycki & Halpenny, 2014, as cited in Fauzi et al., 2025).

Regular physical exercise provides both physical and psychological benefits. Physically, exercise may improve stamina, muscular strength, body endurance, and flexibility while reducing the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disorders. Psychologically, exercise is associated with improved mood,

reduced stress, and increased self-confidence. However, despite these benefits, maintaining exercise consistency remains a challenge for many individuals. Many people initially begin exercise programs with high enthusiasm, but motivation often decreases over time, leading to reduced adherence to physical activity routines (Setia & Winarno, 2021).

Exercise motivation is influenced by both internal and external factors. One external factor frequently associated with exercise motivation is music. Music is commonly used during exercise because it may influence emotional states, concentration, exercise enjoyment, and perceived physical effort. According to Halimah (2016), music is an artistic expression composed of rhythm, melody, and harmony capable of influencing emotions and cognition. Similarly, Amerry et al. (2022) explained that music functions as a medium for expressing emotions and human experiences through sound. In the context of sports and physical exercise, music is not only considered entertainment but also a psychological stimulus that may enhance exercise motivation and engagement.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the positive role of music in exercise performance and motivation. Tresna (2024) reported that listening to music during physical exercise increased exercise motivation and workout performance among gym participants. Similarly, Ghifari (2024) found that Electronic Dance Music (EDM) positively influenced physical performance during resistance training sessions. Araújo et al. (2018) further demonstrated that preferred music

significantly increased repetition performance during strength exercises, while Thakare et al. (2017) found that music tempo significantly influenced exercise performance and heart rate among young adults. These findings indicate that music selection and tempo may contribute positively to exercise intensity, enjoyment, and perceived endurance.

From the perspective of motivational psychology, music may function as an external motivational stimulus that supports exercise adherence and emotional engagement during physical activity. Self-Determination Theory explains that individuals are more likely to maintain exercise behavior when they experience enjoyment, competence, and positive emotional responses during activity participation. Music may help fulfill these psychological needs by creating a more enjoyable and motivating exercise environment. In addition, exercise adherence theory emphasizes that positive affective experiences during exercise contribute significantly to long-term exercise consistency and behavioral maintenance.

In fitness culture, individuals who demonstrate strong commitment toward exercise and healthy lifestyles are often referred to as fitness enthusiasts. These individuals generally engage in regular physical exercise, maintain dietary discipline, and pursue specific fitness goals such as muscle development, endurance improvement, or physical appearance enhancement. Motivation therefore becomes an essential factor influencing the sustainability of exercise participation. According to Asnaldi et al. (2018) and Bayudamai and Yuliasrid (2022), motivation plays an important role in shaping

confidence, enthusiasm, and persistence in sports participation. Likewise, Putra (2020) and Saputra (2019) explained that exercise motivation reflects individuals' level of interest and appreciation toward physical activity.

In addition to motivation, music preference may also influence the effectiveness of music during exercise. Certain genres such as electronic music, hip-hop, and rock are frequently preferred by fitness enthusiasts because energetic rhythms and fast tempos may increase enthusiasm and movement synchronization during workouts. Fast-tempo music may also reduce perceived fatigue, improve concentration, and maintain exercise rhythm throughout training sessions. Consequently, music may function not only as background entertainment but also as a psychological support strategy that contributes to exercise motivation and workout experience.

Previous studies have mainly focused on the physiological effects of music during exercise, while limited research has explored fitness enthusiasts' perceptions regarding how music influences exercise motivation and workout enjoyment in gym settings. Furthermore, limited studies have examined music from the perspective of motivational psychology and exercise adherence among recreational fitness participants. Therefore, this study attempts to address this research gap by examining fitness enthusiasts' perceptions regarding the role of music in enhancing exercise motivation during gym-based exercise activities.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore fitness enthusiasts' perceptions regarding the

influence of music on exercise motivation in gym settings. Additionally, this study seeks to identify how music is utilized as part of exercise routines and which types of music are perceived as most effective in supporting motivation and workout enjoyment. The findings are expected to contribute to a better understanding of music as a psychological support strategy that may improve exercise motivation, workout consistency, and exercise experience among fitness participants.

B. Methods

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design using a survey approach to examine fitness enthusiasts' perceptions regarding the role of music in enhancing exercise motivation during gym-based physical activity. A quantitative descriptive design was considered appropriate because the study focused on measuring respondents' perceptions systematically through numerical data obtained from questionnaires.

The participants consisted of 50 fitness enthusiasts who routinely exercised in several fitness centers in Cirebon. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on specific inclusion criteria, namely: (1) actively participating in gym-based exercise activities, (2) exercising regularly at least once per week, and (3) frequently listening to music during exercise sessions. The participants were between 15 and 30 years old. Purposive sampling was chosen to ensure that all respondents had relevant experience related to the use of music during exercise activities.

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire developed based on indicators related to exercise motivation, workout enjoyment, concentration, exercise intensity, and workout consistency. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale consisting of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. Each response was scored from one to five to facilitate quantitative analysis.

Prior to data collection, the questionnaire instrument was reviewed to ensure clarity and suitability of the statements with the research objectives. Instrument validity was evaluated through content review, while internal consistency reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha analysis. The reliability results indicated that the questionnaire demonstrated acceptable internal consistency for descriptive survey research purposes.

Participation in this study was voluntary. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and agreed to participate through informed consent procedures. Respondent confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively using frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. Mean score interpretation followed five categories: very low, low, moderate, high, and very high. The descriptive analysis was intended to identify respondents' general perceptions regarding the role of music in exercise motivation. Because this study employed a descriptive non-experimental design, the findings were interpreted as subjective perceptions of respondents and did

not indicate causal relationships between music and exercise performance or motivation.

This study involved 50 respondents who actively participated in gym-based exercise activities in several fitness centers in Cirebon. The distribution of respondent characteristics is presented in Table 1.

C. Results and Discussion

Result

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Category	Classification	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	36	72%
	Female	14	28%
Exercise Frequency	<2 times/week	29	58%
	2–3 times/week	18	36%
	4–5 times/week	1	2%
	Others	2	4%
Total		50	100%

Based on Table 1, most respondents were male participants (72%), while female respondents represented 28% of the total sample. Regarding exercise frequency, most respondents exercised less than two times per week (58%), followed by those exercising two to three times per week (36%). These findings indicate that the majority of

respondents represented recreational fitness participants with light to moderate exercise frequency.

Mean Score Interpretation

The interpretation of mean scores used in this study is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Score Interpretation

Mean Range	Category
4.20–5.00	Very High
3.40–4.19	High
2.60–3.39	Moderate
1.80–2.59	Low
1.00–1.79	Very Low

Questionnaire Analysis Results

The questionnaire results regarding respondents' perceptions of the role

of music in enhancing exercise motivation are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Questionnaire Results on Respondents' Perceptions

Aspect Measured	Mean Score	Category
Exercise enthusiasm	4.06	High
Exercise focus	3.92	High
Reduced fatigue perception	4.06	High
Increased workout intensity	4.08	High
Workout enjoyment	4.34	Very High
Motivation without music	3.94	High
Workout rhythm	3.92	High

Inspirational effect of lyrics	4.00	High
Workout consistency	4.14	High
Achievement of workout targets	4.08	High
Extended workout duration	4.12	High
Perception of workout time	4.00	High
Regularity of movement rhythm	3.96	High
Increased repetitions during strength training	4.10	High
Enjoyment during exercise sessions	4.26	Very High
Overall Mean	4.07	High

Based on Table 3, all questionnaire items obtained mean scores ranging from 3.92 to 4.34, indicating high to very high perception categories. The highest mean score was found in the statement that music makes workout sessions more enjoyable ($M = 4.34$), followed by the statement that respondents enjoy exercise sessions more while listening to music ($M = 4.26$). Meanwhile, the lowest mean scores were found in statements related to exercise focus and workout rhythm ($M = 3.92$), although these scores still remained within the high category.

Overall, the descriptive analysis showed that most respondents positively perceived music as a supporting factor for exercise motivation, workout enjoyment, focus, and exercise consistency. Approximately 81% of total responses across all questionnaire items were categorized within the “agree” and “strongly agree” response categories. This percentage was calculated from the aggregate distribution of positive responses across the 15 questionnaire statements completed by 50 respondents.

However, because this study employed a descriptive survey design, the findings should be interpreted as respondents’ subjective perceptions rather than

direct evidence that music objectively improves exercise performance or exercise motivation. Therefore, the results indicate perceived psychological benefits associated with music during exercise rather than causal relationships between music and exercise outcomes.

Discussion

Perceptions of the Role of Music in Enhancing Exercise Motivation

The findings of this study indicate that respondents generally perceived music positively as a supporting factor in enhancing exercise motivation during gym-based physical activity. The descriptive analysis showed that all questionnaire items obtained mean scores within the high to very high categories, indicating strong positive perceptions toward the use of music during exercise sessions. These findings suggest that music may function as an important psychological stimulus that contributes to exercise enthusiasm, enjoyment, concentration, and workout consistency.

The statement that music increases enthusiasm for exercise obtained a high mean score ($M = 4.06$), indicating that respondents perceived music as capable of improving emotional engagement during workouts. This finding

supports the perspective of motivational psychology, which explains that external stimuli such as music may influence affective states and increase exercise adherence. Karageorghis and Priest (2012) argued that music functions as a motivational stimulant capable of modifying effort perception and increasing emotional involvement during physical activity. In the context of Self-Determination Theory, enjoyable exercise experiences may strengthen intrinsic motivation because individuals are more likely to continue activities perceived as satisfying and emotionally rewarding.

The findings also showed that respondents perceived music as helpful in reducing feelings of fatigue during exercise ($M = 4.06$). This result is consistent with the attentional dissociation theory proposed by Priest and Karageorghis (2008), which explains that music may divert attention away from physical discomfort and fatigue toward more pleasant external stimuli. Through this mechanism, individuals may perceive exercise sessions as less physically demanding, allowing them to maintain activity for longer durations. However, because the present study relied solely on self-reported perceptions, these findings should not be interpreted as direct physiological evidence regarding fatigue reduction.

Music, Focus, and Exercise Intensity

The statement regarding music helping respondents maintain focus during exercise obtained a mean score of 3.92, which remained within the high category. Although this score was relatively lower than several

other questionnaire items, the result still indicates that respondents perceived music as contributing positively to concentration during workouts. Terry et al. (2020) explained that music may improve selective attention by masking distracting environmental stimuli such as equipment noise and surrounding conversations. Consequently, individuals may maintain better concentration on movement patterns, exercise techniques, and workout targets during training sessions.

Similarly, the statement regarding music increasing workout intensity obtained a high mean score ($M = 4.08$). This finding supports previous studies indicating that fast-tempo music may stimulate physiological activation and increase exercise engagement. Biagini et al. (2012) reported that energetic music contributed positively to exercise intensity and motivational responses during resistance training sessions. Fast rhythm and strong beats may encourage synchronization between body movement and auditory stimulation, thereby improving exercise rhythm and perceived energy during workouts. Nevertheless, individual differences in music preference may influence these responses, meaning that not all participants necessarily experience the same motivational effects from similar musical characteristics.

Music, Enjoyment, and Positive Exercise Experience

The highest mean score in this study was found in the statement that music makes workout sessions more enjoyable ($M = 4.34$). In addition, respondents also strongly agreed that they enjoyed exercise sessions more while listening to music ($M = 4.26$).

These findings emphasize the important affective role of music in shaping positive exercise experiences. Szabo et al. (1999) explained that music exposure during physical activity is associated with increased enjoyment and reduced discomfort during exercise participation. From a psychological perspective, positive emotional experiences are important predictors of long-term exercise adherence because individuals are more likely to maintain behaviors perceived as enjoyable.

The findings are also consistent with the exercise adherence framework proposed by Ekkekakis et al. (2011), which suggests that emotional pleasure during exercise significantly contributes to individuals' willingness to maintain regular physical activity. Therefore, music may indirectly contribute to exercise consistency by creating more enjoyable workout environments and reducing boredom during repetitive training routines. However, the present findings remain limited to respondents' subjective perceptions and do not objectively measure long-term exercise adherence or behavioral consistency.

Music and Exercise Consistency

The statement regarding music helping respondents maintain workout consistency obtained a high mean score ($M = 4.14$), while the statement regarding certain music genres helping respondents achieve workout targets obtained a mean score of 4.08. These findings suggest that respondents perceived music not merely as background entertainment but also as a psychological support mechanism that may strengthen exercise routines and motivational

commitment. Karageorghis et al. (2009) explained that music may function as a behavioral cue capable of reinforcing exercise habits and conditioning individuals to associate music with physical activity routines.

In addition, respondents reported feeling less motivated when exercising without music ($M = 3.94$). This finding may indicate the emergence of music-dependent motivation, a condition in which individuals become psychologically accustomed to using music as a motivational catalyst during exercise activities (North & Hargreaves, 2008). Although this phenomenon may contribute positively to exercise engagement, excessive dependence on external stimuli such as music may reduce intrinsic exercise motivation when music is unavailable. Therefore, music should ideally function as complementary support rather than the sole source of exercise motivation.

Music and Exercise Performance

From the performance dimension, respondents perceived that appropriate music could extend workout duration ($M = 4.12$) and reduce awareness of exercise duration while listening to music ($M = 4.00$). These findings reflect the phenomenon of time perception distortion, in which individuals perceive exercise duration as shorter than actual elapsed time because their attention is directed toward musical stimulation rather than physical stimulation. Nakamura et al. (2010) explained that music may alter temporal perception by redirecting attentional focus toward rhythm and melody, thereby reducing boredom and psychological fatigue during exercise sessions.

Furthermore, respondents perceived that music encouraged them to increase repetitions during strength training exercises ($M = 4.10$). This finding supports the study conducted by Araújo et al. (2018), which demonstrated that preferred music significantly increased repetition performance during resistance training sessions. Music may increase confidence, emotional arousal, and perceived energy, thereby encouraging individuals to maintain effort during physically demanding activities. Nevertheless, the current study only examined perceived performance enhancement rather than objectively measuring physiological performance outcomes such as muscular endurance, heart rate, or exercise efficiency.

Several limitations should be acknowledged in this study. First, the study employed a descriptive survey design relying entirely on self-reported perceptions, which may introduce response bias and subjective interpretation. Second, the sample was limited to fitness enthusiasts in several gym centers in Cirebon, limiting the generalizability of the findings to broader fitness populations. Third, the study did not examine differences in music genre, tempo, or individual music preferences in detail, despite these variables potentially influencing motivational responses differently across participants. Finally, the study did not include objective physiological measurements related to exercise performance. Therefore, future research is recommended to apply experimental designs, involve larger and more diverse samples, and integrate physiological indicators to examine more comprehensively the relationship between music and

exercise motivation.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that music is positively perceived by fitness enthusiasts as an important factor supporting exercise motivation, workout enjoyment, concentration, and exercise consistency during gym-based physical activity. The descriptive findings showed that respondents generally agreed that music contributes to a more enjoyable and engaging exercise experience, particularly in increasing exercise enthusiasm, reducing perceived fatigue, maintaining workout rhythm, and supporting consistency in physical training routines.

The findings also indicate that music may function as a psychological support strategy that enhances emotional engagement during exercise sessions. Respondents perceived that appropriate music, especially music with energetic rhythm and suitable tempo, helped create a more motivating training atmosphere and encouraged greater participation during workouts. These perceptions support previous studies suggesting that music may improve affective responses and exercise adherence in physical activity settings.

However, the findings of this study should be interpreted within several limitations. The study employed a descriptive survey design that focused only on respondents' subjective perceptions and did not objectively measure physiological performance or causal relationships between music and exercise outcomes. In addition, the sample was limited to fitness participants from several gym centers in Cirebon, which may limit the generalizability

of the findings to broader populations.

Therefore, future research is recommended to apply experimental research designs involving objective physiological measurements, such as heart rate, endurance, and exercise performance indicators. Future studies should also examine the influence of different music genres, tempo variations, and individual music preferences on exercise motivation and physical performance more comprehensively.

E. Acknowledgment

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F. Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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