

IFT 6570

Field notes

Oct 7

Cepsum, university gym

After entering from the entrance there is a long long staircase which brings us up to the first floor which contains the information cube and the student card reader. After scanning the student tID we can enter the gym premise.

First thing I can see is the locker rooms , everywhere I look there is a water fountain. The gym is very quiet and calm. I can hear the ball noises and shoe noises from the people playing table tennis on the lowest floor.

All the table tennis tables(3) are full and I can see the squash rooms are mostly full (4/6).

There are not many people on the first floor but as I come down the interior staircase I can see a class of Judo has finished and 20 people come out of the room heading to the locker room.

Some are in pairs and some are individual. All have sweaty, red faces, and seem very tired.

One floor down there is the setting area for squash rooms.

I pass the long long hallway and reach the gym. I passed another water fountain in the hallway.

I have to scan my card again to enter the gym salon.

At the left of the card scanner there is the information center with 2 men sitting in it.

At the right of me I can see a room divided by glass. The room is empty.

There is some music playing in the gym.

Entering the gym there is fake grass and people are stretching while using the matts. Parallel to it ,there are 3 lines of cycles.

All around the gym there are treadmills. Then there are the weight lifting racks and weights and benches. All over the gym is a mirror.

Gym is very crowded. Most machines and racks are full.

Most people are individuals but I can see some groups of 3 and some couples(2). One is working and the other is waiting patiently.

Even Though the gym is crowded, I can't hear much conversation noises.

Just the music and some machine (clicking) noises.

Between working out most people are on their phone or talking to their friend.

Most people have their own headphones and listen to music.

The number of men and women are not the same. There are just 6 girls in my sight but I can count over 30 men.

Even Though gym is very crowded, I never bumped into anyone.

Suddenly around me is more crowded around me and I can hear more chattings.

I can see a tv with husky games going on. Noone is paying attention to it .

The air quality is good. Two fans are working in my sight, and 2 others are off.

The most used machines are weight lifting ones and most of the treadmills and cycles are unused.

The colors used here are just black and gray and some dark blue. People are wearing colorful outfits.

Gym got empty and less crowded over time. It's 9:58 P.M. and the gym closes at 11 P.M but suddenly the number of people is reduced.

It's much quieter. Just a lady on the treadmill and all the other ones are empty.

People do their exercise and put everything back in their places.

There are cleaning stations with cleanser spray and paper towels and garbage cans. Some people are using them to clean the machines after themselves or before their use.

Gym is mostly clean and in order. The free towels that you can pick at the entrance are being used and forgotten behind. They can be found under the seats or behind the machines. More people joined running on treadmills. 2 girls and 1 boy.

Between each 4 treadmills there are benches for setting. These benches are in use. People sitting on them and using their phones.

People are in the age of 20-30.

I can't see anything throughout the windows as the outside is dark, they just show insides reflections.

As I walk towards the end of the gym, containing leg training machines, the distribution of both genders becomes more balanced but in the middle of the gym I can see just two girls on treadmills and men using the weights and benches.

The gym divides to two lines in the middle with two sided mirror panels everywhere I look there are mirrors.

The TV is showing some sportif advertisements. There are 4 TVs in the gym showing the same thing at the same time.

Most people are wearing NIKE airforce sneakers.

It's 10:26 and the gym is getting less and less crowded. 2 more ladies joined.

Gym crew in blue shirts and black pants walking around the gym and sorting out the pieces and collecting the towels which were left behind. It's 10:40 and the gym is very quiet and empty.

Music is still going on.

All the fans are off. Gym is quiet. 2 crews keep going around.

MEMO:

During my observations at the gym, I noticed a striking contrast between how busy and populated different areas were at different times. While the gym itself became less crowded as the night progressed, it was interesting to see the high turnover in specific areas, such as the weightlifting racks and stretching zones, which remained in use even as people began to leave. The gender imbalance, particularly in the weightlifting area, stood out, as well as the predominance of individual workouts over group sessions. Despite the crowded environment, people managed to avoid physical interactions, which made me reflect on the spatial awareness and unspoken social etiquette present in shared spaces. The cleanliness and orderliness of the gym were also apparent, with cleaning stations being utilized by a majority of the gym-goers. This shows a sense of responsibility among the attendees, though the occasional forgotten towels point to minor lapses in attention.

For the next session, I intend to shift my focus towards different patterns of interactions, especially among smaller groups and couples, to explore how their dynamics differ from those working out individually. I also plan to observe different time slots, perhaps during the gym's

quieter hours or earlier in the day, to understand whether the behaviors and activities change with the number of people present. Lastly, I want to pay more attention to the specific usage of equipment, particularly less common machines like the cycles and stairmasters, to see how people rotate among different types of workouts and whether this differs between genders or fitness levels.

Oct 8

It's 8P.M. and I'm using the tunnel from the metro station to the gym. Its very crowded, people passing me are single individuals. They are using their phones in silence.

Entering the gym, it's full of people. All machines are full. cheerleaders team are training, all ladies in pink outfits.

Passing some people in the hallway, everyone is smiling and laughing with sweaty, red faces. The distribution of women and men is 1 to 3 tonight.

Most treadmills are full (14/20).

The gym is full. All the machines are full but there is not much noise. Some music is playing but its not heard well.

TV is showing football. Noone is watching.

Most people are in the age of 20-35. People are wearing colorful sportswear but I can see black is the most common color.

People are either talking with their friend or using their phone while having airpods oni can't see any individuals without headphones (airpods or big headphones). I can see the number of people using airpods or headphones is the same. I can see 4 men in front of me with big headphones and 2 women one with airpods and the other with headphones. 3 men using airpods.

People either stair at their phone or in the mirror when they are not exercising.

2 gym crew for tonight. One woman and one man. Moving around the gym and sorting out things- picking towels up, putting weights back on the rack.

I can see 6 people with judo outfits in the gym working out and 2 other men with university team outfits.

Gym is crowded. All the machines are in use. Even though the gym is crowded, I can't see long lines for the machines. Seems people figured out how to have a flow between machines.

There is no traffic or bumping into each other.

More people joined in running, every new person chose the corner treadmill if it's available or they tried to choose the one without any neighbor treadmill in use.

I have been here for so long observing people but I made no eye contact.

People during exercising don't look around and while resting they seem busy looking in their phone or looking at themselves in the mirror.

There is a man with a big tripod. He carefully placed the stand near the machine he wanted to use, he checked the image and then carefully passed the tripod and sat in the machine. After finishing his workout he moved the stand with him to the next machine.

Some people run on the treadmills and some walk on it. A man approached another man and asked a question [I think he asked how much more he needed the machine] and then he stood in the corner waiting. The first man finished his workout and cleaned the seat and the machine with the spray and towel. The second man thanked and took over the machine.

The lighting in the gym is so bright. Outside is all black but inside is very bright and fresh.

Some people finish their workout and then head to the stretching area.

2 ladies finished their work with the dumbbells and moved them to their stand by rolling them on the ground with their feet instead of picking them up.

MEMO:

Today's observation revealed a lot about how people move and interact within the gym space, particularly in terms of how the flow of individuals between machines seemed natural and efficient, even during peak hours. It was striking to see how people navigated the crowded environment without the usual jostling or waiting times, suggesting an unspoken understanding among gym-goers. The presence of various teams, like the cheerleaders and the judo practitioners, added to the diversity of activity, but didn't seem to disrupt the overall flow. The minimal interaction between individuals—most people absorbed in their workouts or phones—was notable, reinforcing the idea that the gym is more of an individual space, even when crowded. Additionally, the tripod user caught my attention as an anomaly, and I'm curious how people felt about being filmed or whether they even noticed.

Next time, I plan to shift my focus to those who use equipment like the tripods, or those taking group classes, to understand how they interact differently with the space and others. I also intend to pay closer attention to specific equipment that isn't as popular—like the cycles or lesser-used machines—and how people decide when and if to use them. This could reveal patterns in machine usage based on gender, fitness goals, or even time of day. Finally, I'll aim to observe interactions between staff and gym members more closely, as they seem like key figures in maintaining the order and flow within the gym, even during busy hours.

Oct 9

It's 7:45 P.M., and the gym is very lively as I enter. The atmosphere is noticeably more energetic than on previous days. After scanning my student card, I head towards the main gym area, passing the same familiar water fountains and locker rooms. The locker rooms are busier than usual, with several groups of students chatting and laughing as they make their way out. There is a group of people in the locker rooms talking and laughing. A group of three passed me while talking. They had their badminton rackets on. A guy with a big bag is wearing his hat. He has a big box of badminton shuttles.

Two people talking in the middle of locker rooms. Inside the gym is crowded. There are 4 people in the fake grass area. Two of them are using some blue balls and a guy is using a jump rope. There are three stairmaster machines and 2 of them are full. The one in the middle left empty. Except for two treadmills, all the others are full and most people are running on them except three people. Two ladies are walking on the treadmill while talking. The machine is in incline mode.

There are two guys sitting in the information booth tonight. All the machines are full and it's hard to pass the hallway without bumping into people. The hallway is full of people. At the end of the gym all benches are full and some people are standing waiting left and right in the area. At the last corner of the gym there is an empty area that most ladies are using for exercising with a bar. There is no mirror in this corner but the glass is reflecting as the outside is dark but no one is looking at them.

People have some interaction with each other. They ask questions and wait in line.

There is a group of 4 guys working out in the same area and they cheer each other up loudly.

The one working out making some noise and the rest shouting.

The gym is very noisy. TVs are showing sports news but no one seems to watch it.

Even though the gym is very crowded and people are in line, everyone seems very relaxed and unbothered. There is a man with a notebook and a book. He works out alone but from time to time goes to a group of people and talks to them. He reads his book between his workouts and writes something in his notebook while sitting on the ground.

There is a lady watching a workout video and trying to do the same. She looked at the video and started the exercise and stopped and looked at the video again. I can see the video from youtube.

Water fountain in the gym is mostly free but in some moments there are some people in line to use it but the line passes so fast and it's all empty again.

All the fans are working but the temperature seems hotter than usual.

There is a group of people I have seen in past nights as well that seem very present in the gym.

The gym crew came to them and talked in their group for some time, they lagged and after some time everyone went back to their workout.

There is not much interaction between gym crew and members except when members enter the gym and the usual hello and greeting and taking the towel and at the end they greet and leave the gym.

There are two ladies walking around the gym with gym crew and [[I assume it's a gym tour]] later he explains some workout and guide them into how to use some machines. He didn't leave their

side and stayed till the end of workout. The number of crews is unusual. There are more gym crew present in the gym tonight.

MEMO:

On my final observation day, I noticed a distinct shift in the gym's atmosphere compared to previous visits. The energy was notably higher, with people interacting more, forming workout groups, and even cheering each other on, which created a noisier and livelier environment. This highlighted how certain groups create micro-environments within the gym, contrasting with the typically quieter, individual-focused workouts I had seen before. The presence of people using the space for varied activities, like the man with a notebook and the lady following a workout video, added a layer of diversity to how the gym is used. The heightened activity levels, paired with a noticeable increase in gym crew presence, made the space feel more structured yet social. This made me think about how group dynamics, staff involvement, and specific types of workout activities shape the overall gym experience.

Moving forward, if I were to continue these observations, I would focus on deeper comparisons between peak and non-peak hours to see how the different levels of gym attendance influence these group dynamics and interactions. I would also aim to follow up on the role of the gym crew in maintaining the order and flow during busier hours, especially their interactions with both regulars and newcomers, as demonstrated by the gym tour. Additionally, I'd explore how these patterns of behavior shift depending on the size and familiarity of groups, to understand how comfort or routine influences how people engage with both the space and one another. This final visit raised new questions about how structured guidance (like the gym tour) impacts user engagement and if that differs for experienced versus new gym-goers.