

# Fitness Coaching: Analysis of a Developing Profession in Senegal

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## Abstract

Initially considered as a simple passion and a voluntary commitment, fitness coaching is becoming more and more professional and seems to be becoming a real profession in Senegal today. This situation is due in part to the growing demand for fitness activities expressed by a large part of the population. The aim of this study is to take stock of the situation of fitness coaches in Senegal. Specifically, it is a question of analyzing their socio-demographic profiles, their levels of education and training in the field of sport, and the conditions of exercise of their profession. This research is based on a mixed methodology combining a questionnaire survey (n = 124) and a series of 23 semi-structured interviews conducted with actors in the fitness sector in Dakar. The results show that the supervision of fitness activities is mainly characterized by a male population composed mainly of young people with a high level of education. Coaching in fitness appears as a “second” profession that complements another professional occupation. Moreover, the fitness sector is characterized by the “pluriactivity” where is mixed interventions in several fitness rooms and professional occupations in other sectors.

## Keywords

Fitness Coaching, Profession, Job, Sport Club, Personal Trainer

## 1. Introduction

In Senegal, the supply of fitness activities has increased significantly in recent decades due to a growing concern of a part of the population for their health and well-being. The importance of taking care of your body is now a trend in Senegalese society and contributes to the development of a passion for body maintenance practices that cause a fitness boom (Fall, 2022). A survey carried out by Djiba (1998) showed that there were 27 fitness centers that are the work of pri-

vate individuals, and that of Fall (2009) identified more than 58 fitness centers in the department of Dakar. Today, in the Dakar region alone, there are more than 171 fitness centers located in various structures: military barracks, private and parapublic companies, some public administrations, within universities and schools, health facilities, etc. This multiplication of practice spaces for fitness activities encourages many people to engage in fitness coaching. Today, training sessions in fitness multiply with international firms like LesMills, DNA Academy. This has led to an increase in the number of coaches who work not only in sports halls, but also in public spaces, at the beach level.

Whether these activities are organized in fitness clubs, in the open air or by the public authorities through the provision of sports facilities (Djiba, 1998), they imply a mobilization of quality human resources for their supervision. The latter is provided by supervisors who must meet the growing expectations of individuals who wish to be accompanied by professionals in their quest for form and well-being. Indeed, one of the most important factors that attract people to fitness classes is the quality of the coaches who represent the front-line staff (Sané, 2014). Thus, if we want to understand the evolution of the fitness sector, it would be necessary to study the actors that are the supervisors, as well as the contours of their profession.

In a context characterized by an increasing demand for socio-professional integration (ANSD, 2022) and the fragility observed on the labour market that revives the challenge of youth employability (Sall & Tine, 2015), fitness coaching is an opportunity for many people in Senegal. Initially based on a simple passion and volunteer commitment, it seems to become a real profession in Senegal.

The survey presented tries to answer the following questions: What is the profile of fitness supervisors in Senegal? How do they qualify their profession? What are the conditions for exercising fitness coaching in Senegal?

The objectives of this study are to carry out an assessment of the situation of the profession of fitness coach in Senegal. It is specifically to analyze the socio-demographic and training profiles of coaches on the one hand, the conditions for exercising fitness coaching in Senegal on the other.

## **2. Coaching: A Growing Global Practice**

In this section, it is about presenting coaching, its evolution and the different forms it has taken in recent decades.

### **2.1. Coaching: Evolution of a Transatlantic Concept**

For Loucher (2016), although the term coaching is very much a part of our daily lives, it is worth noting how difficult the concept is to identify because of the diversity of its fields of application (Lawton-Smith, 2007). Coaching appeared in the USA in the 1970s, and was imported into Europe at the end of the 1980s to accompany a team or athletes. After having invested in the world of sport, coaching has developed and become more democratic to reach other sectors.

Indeed, although sport has been a fundamental element in its development and is still an essential reference point, coaching has conquered new clientele, first in companies, and more recently, in the private sphere to the point of becoming a real trend. As a result, the coaching market is constantly expanding and is developing into new activities: lean coaching, health coaching, wealth or financial coaching, school or parental coaching, life coaching, career or professional coaching, image coaching...

In management, several authors define coaching as a practice of accompanying one or more people in the form of professional assistance (Chouinard, 2004). The goal of this support is to develop the role of the coach at different levels, according to his needs, such as decision-making, improving his performance or developing skills (Théot & Castro, 2008). Ennis et al. (2004) see it as an individualized development experience and process for leaders to develop their capacity to achieve short- and long-term organizational goals. In the same vein, the French Coaching Company defines professional coaching as support aimed at developing the potential and know-how of individuals or teams according to professional objectives.

In the final analysis, we echo the thoughts of Corbeil (2011) who sees coaching as a practice that creates a relationship between two people (the coach and the coach), the goal being to help the coach improve both personally and professionally. If today we talk about coaching in many areas (professional as well as personal), it should be remembered that this one was inspired by the practices of sports coaching.

## **2.2. Fitness Coaching, a Special Form of Sports Coaching**

Sports coaching, concerns the improvement of athletes or teams in a sport practice through the action of a professional responsible for accompanying them in order to contribute to their development and the achievement of good performances.

Today, being a sports coach can have a double meaning: that of the coach who manages the physical and/or mental preparation of athletes for a competition, or that of the coach who helps the fitness of his clients. The latter, often called fitness coach, can intervene in a sports club, in a company or at home. The emergence of the profession of fitness coach responds to the logic of taking charge of mass sports practice in general, fitness activities in particular. A fitness coach manages and directs fitness classes for groups of clients, such as training programs (cardio, aquagym, crossfit, Pilates, gymnastics, postural, stretching). It can be as much a question of fitness as advice (diet, anti-stress remedies, confidence, etc.).

Does the coach of fitness activities often called “personal trainer”, “fitness trainer” or “fitness instructor” make fitness coaching a real profession? In this work, we will use the concept of “profession” instead of occupation, although the distinction between these two terms is increasingly blurred today. Previously, a

trade had a connotation of manual activity, while the profession was more likely to be described as intellectual (Dubar, 2000). A “Business” would be manual or mechanical work based on a set of embedded knowledge. It is a skill that is acquired through experience or training, or even routine, while a “Profession” is an activity that calls for scholarly knowledge. In addition, the professions are managed by organizations that provide training, credential recognition and various services to members. In some sectors, such as medicine and architecture, credential recognition is mandatory to practice the profession. While the business line is not immediately attached to a specific internal organisation or to the structure of a service or a company. Some sociologists also agree that the profession is a socially recognized profession, with a widely claimed identity and well-identified know-how (Sorel, 2011).

In summary, let's say that even though coaching today affects several sectors (health, education and training, human resources management, etc.) it is clear that it was born in the sports sector. As much as it is applied excessively in professional sport, so much it gains ground in sports recreation in general, fitness in particular. We find in the literature folding names of individuals who exercise the supervision of fitness activities. The question is how they qualify their profession in Senegal.

### 3. Methodology

This research is based on a mixed methodology combining qualitative and quantitative study. The qualitative study is based on a series of semi-directional interviews conducted with 23 players in the fitness sector in Senegal. The latter were chosen according to a principle of diversification of the sample: fitness instructors (n = 11), managers of fitness rooms (n = 3), representative of a training body (n = 1), fitness practitioners (n = 8). Interviews with owners and managers of fitness rooms were conducted face-to-face with the help of a guide which addressed, in addition to the elements of identification of the interviewees, the topics related to the conditions of practice of the profession of coach, Instructor experience in financial processing and practice. For the instructors, the questions concerned their level of study and training in the field of fitness, whether or not they have a contract, the nature of their work in and outside the fitness rooms and their level of remuneration. Lasting from 30 minutes to 1 hour 10, the 23 semi-directional interviews were conducted in January 2022 and recorded with the agreement of the interviewees.

The investigations were complemented by a literature review. Thus, books and research papers dealing with the theme, as well as articles from the print media and online publications were mobilized. This analysis first identified some general characteristics of the study population, which were then investigated in a quantitative study.

The processing of qualitative data (from interviews and information resources) was done through thematic content analysis (Bardin, 2007).

The quantitative survey, conducted between February and March 2022 in the form of a questionnaire, interviewed 124 fitness coaches, a large majority of whom work in Dakar. The choice of the items contained in the questionnaire was based on the information gathered during the semi-directional interviews as well as the literature. The questionnaire was pre-tested with 11 coaches. This allowed us to check the level of understanding of the questions, to modify some and to repeat others.

The questions concerned their socio-demographic characteristics, their training profiles, the nature of their activities, the types of contracts and their remuneration. Sampling was based on the convenience method. Absolute representativeness with the mother population was not strictly sought, with as many respondents as possible being targeted to ensure a sufficient number of individuals in the study population. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face to the coaches we went to find in fitness centers and fitness practice spaces.

The questionnaires were operated using the SPSS 21 statistical analysis software.

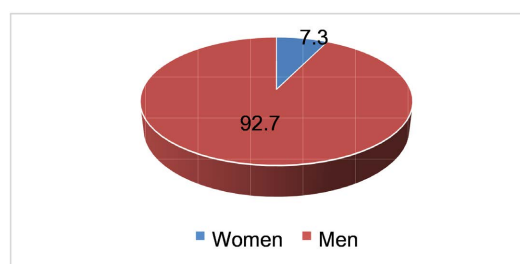
## 4. Results of the Study

The results of the study are presented in this section. They contain tables and figures that are analyzed and discussed.

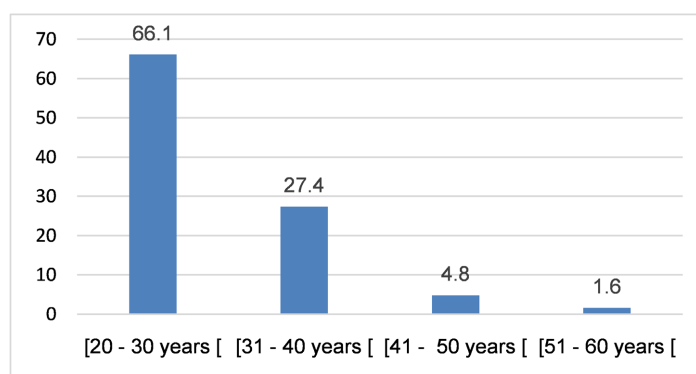
### 4.1. Sociodemographic Profiles of Fitness Trainers

An analysis of the pie chart (**Figure 1**) shows that coaching in fitness seems to be a male occupation: men represent 92.7% of the sample of the population surveyed by questionnaire, compared to 7.3% of women. This data is in addition to the results that have shown that fitness activities remain a male domain in Senegal, both among practitioners (*Diatta, 2007*) and among support staff (*Diedhiou, 2012*). Thus, the world of fitness appears as a universe in which sex constitutes a discriminating element in the career, as well as in many other sports sectors in Senegal (*Diawara, 2011; Sambou, 2008*).

Age, on the other hand, is a determining factor for the continuation of this career. Under-30s represent 66.1% of the sample, 27.4% are between the ages of 30 and 40, while those over 41 represent only 6.4% (**Figure 2**).



**Figure 1.** Distribution of individuals by age. Source: Our survey, 2022.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of individuals by age. Source: Our survey, 2022.

Fitness coaching is a challenging profession that requires good physical fitness. The older you get, the less successful you are at the level of group courses that require the active participation of the coach. The latter must have a good physical disposition because the profession can prove physically exhausting over time. The workload generates fatigue and stress. It is a form of wear and tear in terms of physical management. Marsault et al. (2016) also highlighted the atypical working time of sports coaches because of the time constraints and the hard work. This work is performed at times usually reserved for rest and is characterized by a tension between the preservation of the volunteer posture and the obligation to provide quality service (Legay, 2001). However, while in 2012 the maximum age range was just under 45 (Diedhiou, 2012), in our study 1.6% of respondents are in the [51 - 60] age group. This is likely due to their growing concern for career management. “Today, a lot of coaches take care of their bodies, respect the moments of recovery and make an effort to eat” (a fitness center manager). “Our body is our working tool, which is why I do everything to preserve myself by choosing what I eat, but I also rest well after my sessions” (an instructor).

Table 1 shows that 26.6% of the instructors surveyed have an educational level equal to the baccalaureate. Those who have a Diploma of Completion (nomenclature in the Senegalese education system is BFEM) also constitute 26.6% of instructors against 3.2 holders of a Certificate of Completion of Elementary Education (nomenclature in the Senegalese education system is CFEE). It should be noted that 43.6% of respondents have a level higher than the Baccalaureate, of which 8.9% are in possession of a Certificate of Aptitude for Physical and Sports Education (nomenclature in the Senegalese education system is CAPEPS). With regard to the work of Diedhiou (2012) showing that 48.53% of fitness instructors have a higher education, we can say in our survey that there are more and more graduates of the higher education (a cumulative total of 70.2%), compared to those who are just holders of a BFEM or CFEE.

#### 4.2. When Fitness Coaching Becomes a “Real” Profession

Asked “is fitness coaching a real business in Senegal? 83.2% of respondents

**Table 1.** Educational attainment of respondents.

	Staffs	Percentage
Certificate of Completion of Elementary Education (CEPE)	4	3.2
Secondary School diploma (BFEM)	33	26.6
High School diploma (BAC)	33	26.6
High School diploma with two years (Bac + 2)	1	0.8
Bachelor's degree	41	33.1
Master's degree	1	0.8
CAPEPS	11	8.9
Total	124	100.0

Source: Our survey, 2022.

responded in the affirmative, compared to 16.8% who felt it was not a profession. By analyzing the arguments of both sides, we realize that the positions taken depend on the situation of the respondent who is or is not in stable employment in a sector other than fitness.

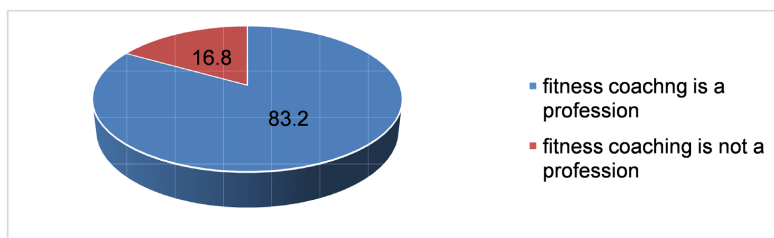
Indeed, for those who only have fitness coaching as a source of income, fitness is “indeed a profession” (a gym manager). Moreover, “we have seen people who were trained at INSEPS and who preferred to be recruited in fitness center rather than to go to work in the public service, this proves that fitness feeds his man well” (an instructor). One coach interviewed believes that “when a job allows you to earn a living, to support yourself, you can say that it is a real job,” while another emphasizes the place of fitness coaching in the daily occupation of the instructor: “There are coaches who do this from morning to night, it’s their job, it’s their livelihood” (Figure 3).

- **What name for your profession?**

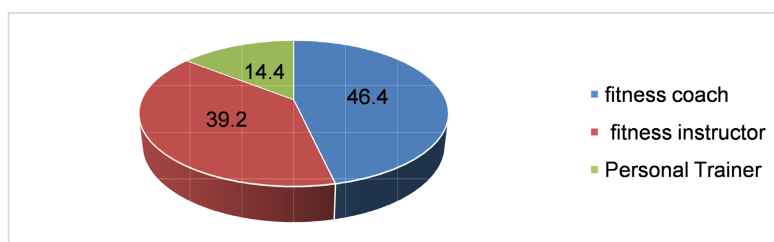
“Personal trainer”, “fitness instructor”, “fitness coach”: several names are used to designate the coach of fitness activities in Senegal. Until the 2010’s, almost all fitness practitioners called themselves “Instructors.” For the past ten years or so, the use of the term “Coach” has become a trend. Indeed, 46.4% call themselves fitness coach, 39.2% monitor, while 1.4% say they are personal trainers (Figure 4).

When asked what difference do you make between “coach” and “instructor”, almost all of the interviewees admit that the term coach sounds more “modern and more rewarding”, while some suggest that the role of the coach is broader than that of the instructor. For them, in fitness clubs, coaches accompany users in their sports practice, individually or in groups, taking into account their specific expectations (bodybuilding, weight loss, flexibility, etc.). The instructor is more involved in group aerobics classes.

The practice of fitness has undergone evolutions, new concepts appear regularly. You have to be more than a monitor to be able to meet the new requirements. This is why coaches must be trained in personal training, small group



**Figure 3.** Answer to the question: is fitness coaching a real profession in Senegal? Source: Our survey, 2022.



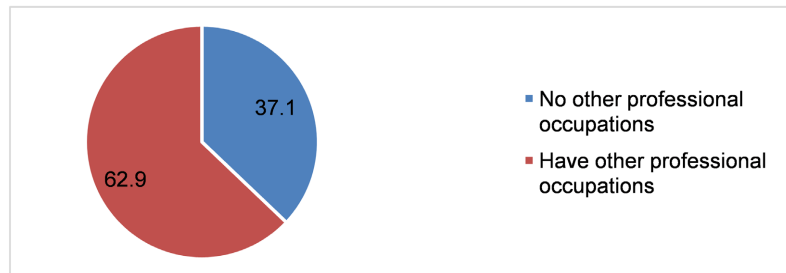
**Figure 4.** Different names of ink in fitness in Senegal. Source: Our survey, 2022.

training and other profiles related to customer relationship management for example” (a representative of a training organisation). Thus, it will be considered that the act of coaching is experiencing technical evolutions with regard to the knowledge and know-how that supervisors must integrate in their work to the extent of the advances of knowledge and transformations of practices of the form. However, we must recognize that these developments are also social, with the emergence of new names such as “coach” or “personal trainer” that point to new knowledge and collective or individual forms of work.

### 4.3. The Training Profiles of Fitness Coaches

It is important to note that at the time of this work, there is no diplomat training in fitness coaching organized by the State of Senegal and recognized nationally. Moreover, the exercise of the profession of coach is itself not subject to any authorization. Only the National Institute of Popular Education and Sport (INSEPS), an institution belonging to the Cheikh Anta Diop University, allows hundreds of young people to strengthen their capacities in intervention in fitness activities through internships. In addition, private organizations, such as Les Mills and DNA Academy, have been offering training and specialization modules on concepts for the past few years. This is probably one of the reasons why the vast majority of the instructors surveyed (94.4%) report having at least one fitness training (Figure 5). However, the demand for self-training, as in some passion professions, exists in fitness coaching in Senegal. Indeed, 5.6% of supervisors consider themselves self-taught and have not followed any formal training. For them, “fitness coaching can be learned on the job with the help of videos and rehearsals”. However, 43.6% hold a diploma higher than the high school diploma (Table 1).





**Figure 5.** Answer to the question: Have you had any fitness training? Source: Our survey, 2022.

More than 2/3 of the supervisors surveyed (69.3%) took an initial training course organized by the National Institute of Popular Education and Sport in Dakar. These are sessions of 3 to 4 weeks organized in the form of internship in which, theoretical and practical courses are taught by the teachers of the Institute, and some professionals who have taken specific training in fitness with international organizations like Les Mills. The DNA academy ranks second among fitness training organizations (27.4%), ahead of Les Mills (17.7%). Established about 10 years ago by Mr. Lee Mills, Les Mills International is based in New Zealand. She is developing a concept of pre-programmed group classes for 14,000 fitness clubs located in 70 countries, drawing on an international team of doctors and experts in sports physiology to create and constantly develop programs.

DNA is a school founded by two coaching and physical preparation experts. Its diplomas and certifications are recognized and accredited EREPS (*European Register of Exercise Professionals*) by Euro Active and the European Community.

It should be noted that in recent years, HBX (Human body exercise) has officially entered the training of fitness coaches in Senegal, although it should be noted that some instructors were able to follow their training by going to France (**Table 2**).

### 4.3. The Conditions of Exercise of the Fitness Coach

- **Single or multi-activity**

We wanted to approach the reality of the professionalism of the fitness coaching profession in Senegal by seeing if the coaches interviewed say they are doing other activities outside of their sports coaching work. We note that the majority of the fitness instructors surveyed are in a multi-activity situation, which is defined as the situation where a person performs several jobs or professional activities under different statuses, simultaneously or consecutively. It is a reality of employment in the fitness sector and affects 62.9 % of our respondents who are otherwise employed. This trend is not far from the one described by **Diedhiou (2012)** in his study which reveals that 70.59 % of the monitors were engaged in other occupations, compared to 29.41 % who were doing only that. In addition,

**Table 2.** Distribution of respondents by training organization.

Training Organisation	Staffs	Percentage
DNA	34	27.4
INSEPS	86	69.3
Les Mills	22	17.7
HBX	7	2.4
Aucun	7	5.6

Source: Our survey, 2022.

the share of the identified multi activity has thus greatly decreased over the last fifteen years where the same proportions of persons engaged in several professional activities were observed (Diedhiou, 2012).

On the other hand, the study shows that coaching is a full-time job for just over a third of the respondents (37.1%), which could be the definition of a professional who devotes all his time to this profession (Figure 6).

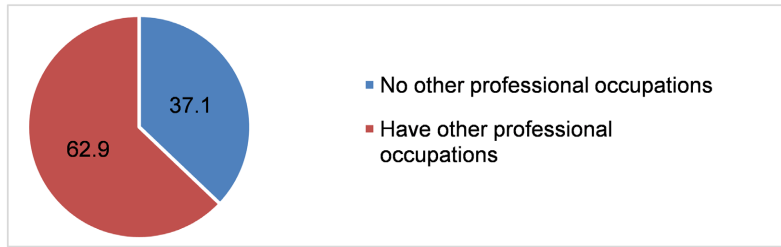
Most supervisors are qualified in sports or have a sporting experience (Table 3). Indeed, there are 8.9% of active athletes, 10.5% of sport coaches in different disciplines, 15.3% of students in sciences and techniques of physical activity and sports and 16.9% of PSE teachers with a certificate of proficiency in PSE teaching, the majority. But it should not be forgotten that many individuals who have entered the coaching profession are in sectors that are sometimes quite distant from the sport: electro mechanic, breeder, graphic designers, letter students, bakery manager (Table 3).

This reflects the image of a fitness coaching world whose hard core is made up of a group that combines the function of instructor with the status of official state agent (mainly sports teacher), or teachers working in private schools and actors in other sectors such as health, safety and volunteers in sports clubs.

In view of these results, we could assess this situation as possibly being a criterion of precariousness if fitness coaching remains the only activity exercised. Those who report working only in the fitness profession may be more likely to have lower incomes, if not virtually non-existent, in the event of a disruption in the fitness sector (Table 7).

- **Workplaces: in the room or at home?**

Fitness coaches generally work in various sports structures or dedicated to the practice of sports: in a sports club, an association, a leisure or holiday center, a fitness room, a fitness center, in hotels, customers' homes or businesses. The vast majority of fitness coaches surveyed (73.4%) are employed in fitness clubs (Table 4). Although fitness rooms are still the fitness instructor's ideal place to exercise, the current trend is to go outside the enclosed areas to practice the activity partially in the open air. Thus, 7.3% of them work outdoors (public squares, natural parks, cornices, beaches, etc.).



**Figure 6.** Distribution of respondents by mono- or pluriactivity. Source: Our survey, 2022.

**Table 3.** Distribution of Respondents by professional Occupation.

Other Professional activities	Staffs	Percentage
Sports coach (catamaran, football, karate, handball)	13	10.5
Private accountant	2	1.6
Electromechanic	1	0.8
Breeders	2	1.6
Student in STAPS	19	15.3
Administrative officials	3	2.4
Security guards	4	3.2
Civil Engineering/Events	1	0.8
Letter students	4	3.2
Bakery manager	1	0.8
Men in uniform (policeman, soldier, fireman, etc.)	10	8.1
Health workers (nurses, physiotherapists, etc.)	4	3.2
Graphique designers	2	1.6
Sports manager	2	1.6
Teachers of Physical Education	21	16.9
Sportsmen (tae kondo, karate, English boxing, handball)	11	8.9
Translator	1	0.8
None	23	18.5
Total	124	100.0

Source: Our survey, 2022.

**Table 4.** Fitness Coach Exercise Locations in Senegal.

Coaching Practice Locations	Staffs	Percentage
1 fitness center	70	56.5
Fitness centers	18	14.5
3 fitness centers	3	2.4
Outdoor	9	7.3
Independent	19	15.3
Do not yet have a room	5	4
Total	124	100.0

Source: Our survey, 2022.

Independent coaches (mostly individual coaches) represent 15.3% of our sample. Most Personal Trainers carry out their activity under the status of independent, supervise and advise their clients, at home. They often make their own equipment available to their customers.

- **Types of employment contracts**

In the fitness sector, 30.7% of supervisors work under contract, of which 19.4% are permanent and 11.3% are fixed-term (**Table 5**). Many coaches work in gyms on the basis of a tacit agreement, without a signed contract. It is usually PSE teachers or other public servants who engage in coaching on their own time. They are very often paid or compensated according to their performance by the gym managers.

- **Variable Wages**

It should be noted at the outset that 23.4% of respondents did not answer the question about their level of remuneration as a fitness coach. This is reminiscent of the taboo nature of income tax reporting for most Senegalese people, such as this instructor, who believes that “you can reveal anything but your salary to the general public”. **Table 6** shows that 28.2% of respondents earn less than 50,000 FCFA (76.2 euros) per month. The monthly salary of 24.2% of the instructors is between 50,000 and 100,000 FCFA (between 76.2 and 152.5 Euros). This is a sector where more than half (52.6%) of supervisors have a level of pay that does not reach the average salary in Senegal. It should be remembered that the average monthly salary of an employee is 122,131 FCFA (186.15 euros) in Senegal (**ANSD, 2016**). In addition, only 15.3% of instructors earn more than 150,000 FCFA monthly income (228.6 euros). Only 8.9% earn twice the average Senegalese salary. To access this level of compensation, several elements may enter into the account. First, the coach’s reputation can greatly influence the salary he receives. This is the case of coach MT who is very well known in Senegal through fitness shows he hosts on the TFM television channel: “Given my reputation in the fitness industry in Senegal, I was able to charge room managers and my clients an hourly rate of at least CFAF 25,000”. Second, the location of the coach’s duties may affect his monthly pay level. Large facilities such as the Olympic Club or Health Fitness pay their instructors better than small fitness

**Table 5.** The nature of contracts for fitness supervisors.

What type of contract	Staffs	Percentage
On my own account	19	15.3
Tacit Agreement (not signed)	57	45.9
Permanent contract	24	19.4
Fixed-term contract (CDD)	14	11.3
Military official	10	8.1
Total	124	100.0

Source: Our survey, 2022.

**Table 6.** Level of remuneration of fitness supervisors.

Wage (in Euros)	Wage (in francs CFA)	Staffs	Percentage
Less than 76.2 Euros	Less than de 50,000 FCFA	35	28.2
between 76.2 and 152.5 Euros	between 50,000 and 100,000 FCFA	30	24.2
between 153 and 228.7 Euros	between 101,000 and 150,000 FCFA	11	8.9
between 229 and 305 FCFA	between 151,000 and 200,000 FCFA	4	3.2
between 306 and 381.3 Euros	between 201,000 and 250,000 FCFA	3	2.4
between 382 and 457.5 Euros	between 251,000 and 300,000 FCFA	8	6.5
More than 457.5 Euros	More than 300,000 FCFA	4	3.2
Have not spoken	Have not spoken	29	23.4
	Total	124	100.0

Source: Our survey, 2022.

centers. Personal coaches who go to clients' homes also earn more than those who work in fitness centers.

*"It is much more cost-effective to give courses at home in the amount of 20,000 to 25,000 FCFA per session than to work in most sports club where the amounts collected per month rarely exceed 150,000 FCFA. That's why I stopped working in the fitness centers, if I go there it's to do individual coaching to a client registered in this room"* (a coach).

Finally, the nature of the contracts may affect the level of remuneration of the coaches. Those with a permanent contract receive more and receive social protection (health insurance, social security and pension contributions). *"When you have a fixed-term or indeterminate contract, you owe a specified number of hours to your employer. Beyond this hourly volume, each hour of coaching will be counted as overtime. That's what makes you money if you know how to negotiate a fixed salary"* (a coach).

It is important to note that there are coaches who, although they do not earn a lot of money, emphasize another type of reward: prestige and recognition in the fitness industry.

*"If I am known today everywhere I go, it is thanks to fitness. People congratulate me on what I do in fitness, especially when I am on television. I have helped many people achieve their health goals. I have made a lot of acquaintances through the hiking and fitness I organize. The reason I was able to have an assignment in Dakar was that I was able to use one of those meetings to approach the minister of education to explain my problem to him. He reacted positively"*.

In addition, at this stage, one might wonder whether the profession of fitness coach constitutes a way of social advancement for those many instructors who do not manage to earn an amount equivalent to that of the average salary in Senegal and for those who do not have an employment contract in proper form. They are more at risk of becoming precarious, as was the case with the closure of sports halls to fight the spread of the covid-19 virus in Senegal. In fact, 21.8% of

respondents reported a total loss of income, while 41.1% lost significantly their monthly income (Table 7). Some fitness centers owners do not pay for an unpaid service. However, we note that 2 instructors have managed to increase their revenues by allowing their clients to continue to follow their courses online via platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Tik Tok. However, if the effectiveness of online coaching was demonstrated by the pilot study by Cao et al. (2021) in the area of health coaching for the elderly, in the context of physical fitness practice, no study has yet been conducted on the impact at the practice level.

- **Nature of work: one-on-one coaching or group courses**

Half of the instructors regularly conduct group classes, 21% often do so, compared with 15.5% who rarely do (Table 8). It should be noted that 13.7% do not conduct group courses. In group classes, the coach usually takes care of the facilitation of sessions such as cardio-training, stretching or aerobics. They must first prepare the appropriate animation, choreography, and accompanying music (Fall, 2009). The group instructor usually works in fitness rooms or on trays set up at public places or at the beach.

On the other hand, 21.8% regularly do individual coaching, 29.8% often do, while 21.8% rarely do. In a personal training, the coach assesses the physical abilities and level of his client, sets up an adapted and personalized training program, and ensures that it is carried out and that it is put into good technical practice (postures, safety in the use of devices, health, etc.). The personal trainer

**Table 7.** Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on respondent incomes.

Impact of Covid-19 on Revenue	Staffs	Percentage
Total lack of income from fitness coaching	27	21.8
Significant decrease in revenue	51	41.1
Partial decrease in income	38	30.7
Stable income (I was receiving my salary)	6	4.8
Revenue increase	2	1.6
Total	124	100.0

Source: Our survey, 2022.

**Table 8.** Nature of respondent work (collective or individual).

	Group courses		Individual coaching	
	Staffs	Percentage	Staffs	Percentage
Yes, a lot	63	50.8	27	21.8
Yes, often	26	21.0	37	29.8
Yes, rarely	18	14.5	27	21.8
No, never	17	13.7	33	26.6
Total	124	100.0	124	100.0

Source: Our survey, 2022.

can work in the gym or at the home of his clients. He can move with his equipment (mats, dumbbells...) when it comes to coaching at home or in his clients' offices.

It is important to remember that in many fitness centers, individual coaches and group instructors work simultaneously in the format of the “co-presence collective and the co-activity collective” (Pichot & Wipf, 2010). Co-activity means that professionals participate in the activity of the company by providing a service each in his field of predilection (bodybuilding courses, choreographed dance courses, muscle building courses “thighs-abdominal-glutes”) and at the same time but in different places of the room in specific spaces.

In summary, Section 3 of the study was devoted to the results of the socio-demographic profiles of fitness coaches (age, gender, level of education), as well as their level of training in the field of sport in general, fitness activities in particular. It was also discussed to gather their opinions on the qualification of their profession as a coach, the conditions of exercise (mono vs pluriactivity), the nature of employment contracts, the level of remuneration and the possible risks in the event of a crisis in the sector. The overall conclusion of the study is presented in the next section.

## 5. Conclusion

Health concerns and the search for well-being are pushing more and more people to engage in fitness activities in Senegal, causing a boom in fitness. One of the challenges of the quantitative and qualitative development of form practices is the existence of qualified supervisors.

The results show that the supervision of fitness activities is mainly characterized by a male population composed mainly of young people under 30. The share of seniors (over 50 years), although slightly increased in a decade, remains low overall, because it is a job that can be physically demanding.

The level of study of supervisors in the fitness sector is high, with a majority that has a supra high school diploma level including physical education and sports teachers and students in sciences and techniques of physical and sports activities.

For many respondents, fitness coaching appears to be a “second” occupation that complements another occupation. In terms of remuneration, it is easy to see that more than half of coaches cannot earn the equivalent of an average salary in Senegal. Many instructors are forced to combine several employers or clients in order to make a good living. The fitness sector is also characterized by multi-activity, which combines interventions in several fitness rooms and professional occupations in other sectors. And, like many “informal” jobs in Senegal, fitness coaching is not immune to certain crises that can lead to the precariousness of many supervisors. To help these coaches, the State of Senegal, through its Ministry of Sports, should take a number of measures to regulate the sector, to set up diplomatic training and to ensure compliance with the labour code go-

verning employment by owners of fitness centers.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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