

# Sociocultural influences on a person's attitude towards physical exercise and hea...

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



Humans are by nature social beings. In trying to determine what makes us feel fulfilled, psychologists have found that a feeling of social connection or relatedness is near the top of the list of what we need to experience. We appear to be happiest when we successfully connect with others. Much of what we say and do is motivated by a desire to appear likeable, to gain social approval, to solidify group membership, to manage self-image, or to gain social support.

Sociocultural factors that influence a person's attitude towards Health and Physical exercise can be classified into three groups:

1. Self-presentation;
2. Social Influence (social norms and persuasion);
3. Social support;

Self-presentation - the number one most influential factor on how sociocultural influences do have on one's attitude towards health and physical exercise. Self-presentation is where a person tries to influence others on the perception of their own image.

People make many different attempts to manage how others' view them because other people control many of the things we want to obtain, such as friendship, financial resources, or career advancement, we strive to gain others' approval or avoid rejection. In exercise and physical activity settings, these attempts to present ourselves favourably may have either positive or negative effects on our strivings to be physically active. For example, Tim is slightly overweight and has dietary habits that aren't exactly the best and decide to join a gym.

Tim doesn't want to go and run on the treadmill next to a super fit world class athlete because his figure and athletic ability are notably different and he doesn't wish to embarrass himself. We see in this example that Tim has this idea that because he isn't the same as the super fit world class athlete that he isn't healthy and therefore he is reluctant to exercise because he's afraid of embarrassing himself. It's people like Tim that are changing who they are and what they are trying to achieve because of either the public opinion or their friends opinion.

Self-presentation is a major factor in influencing a person's attitude towards health and physical exercise and the way they general perceive themselves in amongst the group or the community. Social Influence Following in contributing factors that influence a person's attitude towards health and physical exercise is Social Influence. Social influence is when an individual's thoughts, feelings or actions are affected by other people's opinions. If you have ever been in an audience at a large musical or theatrical performance, you may have noticed that the audience tends to clap in unison and stop clapping at the same time.

You may have even started to clap when no one else did only to feel foolish and quickly stop clapping. What you are experiencing in these situations is the power of social influence - specifically, social norms and conformity. Social influence can be defined as a real or imaginary pressure exerted by others that shapes our behaviour. While self-presentation describes our actions or attempts to project a positive image to others, social influence describes the pressure exerted by others to influence our action.

In exercise and physical activity settings, there are numerous examples of the power of social influence. Joining a fitness club because other friends pressure you to join, or your teenager's desire to buy the latest pair of basketball shoes because Michael Jordan wears them and touts them on commercial television are both examples of the power of social influence. Social Support Finally, the last group called Social Support. Social Support provides reassurance and/or assistance, information or feedback through contact with other individuals or groups.

People do not exercise merely to look good in other's eyes or because we have been persuaded by others to do so. Sometimes people exercise because they obtain social benefits from physical activity participation. An example would be Fiona is out running on her own and feels vulnerable and exposed and feels like everyone else watching is laughing at her. She joins a gym group that runs regularly and finds comfort in the fact that she isn't the only person who may be struggling. The frequency or type of social contacts may have a strong influence on the general well-being of the person as we see in the example.

As a whole, physical activity participation appears to be nurtured when there is a socially supportive atmosphere or when participants perceive social support when striving for their exercise goals. Plus having feedback from others that boosts their self-esteem helps and allows them to have the opportunity to find a group in which they feel comfortable and are supported emotionally and tangibly and are able to obtain useful guidance or advice from other exercisers, friends, family, or exercise leaders.

In conclusion, the contributing factors mentioned above have a significant impact on the entire health spectrum. Emotional, Physical, Mental, Spiritual and Social aspects are all affected in how sociocultural factors influence a person's ability towards a healthy lifestyle and staying physically active.

### **Bibliography:**

1. Title Pgs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Sydney DistanceEducationHigh School, PD/H/PE 2013 PD/H/PE Second Edition Textbook, 2009 by Oxford University Press (copyright)