

# Power of social norms assignment

[Sociology](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In our day of age, technology has influenced many aspects of our everyday lives. There is not a day where we cannot go without our phones, computers or television sets. If all of that were to be taken from us, most likely we would be in an uproar. Being exposed to such technological devices, we have become consumed with social media. Social media has definitely shaped the way we communicate, get information and the way we interpret things. For example, just recently Miley Cyrus released a music video called Wrecking Ball. Miley Cyrus is known for her innocent Disney role,

Hannah Montana, a young teen who is trying to live a normal life as she juggles being a high school teen and her secret blonde wigged pop star career as Hannah Montana. However, when the music video Wrecking Ball came out, Miley traded her innocent, parent-friendly image for a pixie-cut, red-lipped and cropped attire. The video consisted of a naked Miley riding a steel giant ball destroying cement walls and licking a sledge hammer. When the video was released, many were shocked to see this coming from the former Disney starlet. Some were disgusted by the nudity.

Others loved the singer's video and thought it was a great interpretation of the song. Either way, the video shattered the record for most watched music video and caused many to correctly. Miley Cyrus did something that many here in America are not so exposed to, she broke a personal appearance norm. In America, we are not exposed to such nudity; and if so, the content is usually censored. But we also have to include the gender roles. If a male is nude, it is mostly likely considered as funny, but if a female is nude, it is most likely considered taboo and gets labeled a slut.

Once, Mile appeared fully nude riding a giant steel ball; many labeled it as inappropriate and calling her names, such as slut. However, if you were to show this to people in Europe, they would not be bothered by it. In Europe, they are exposed to nudity; many would consider it as an art form. So why are people concerned with the imagery of the video rather than the meaning behind the song? It all has to do with our culture and environment we are exposed to. Culture consists of language, the behavior and any aspects that surround you in that moment.

It influences the way you see and accept things in society. Every culture has a norms and sanctions that are considered acceptable. Norms are appropriate behaviors based on specific values and sanctions are prizes or punishment you receive when you go against the norm (Carl 54). Once you go against the norm, you are deviant and going against the social order. "Winners are the good and the normal; Losers are the sick, the crazy, the evil..." (Introduction to the Sociology of Deviance) Social Norms cover almost every aspect of the way we live.

However, with standards and guidelines of behavior, it does lead to some pressure to conform (Social Norms, Sociology Norms, Basic Concepts of Sociology Guide). We see people conform every day because they fear society will shun them. Conformity and social norms in society all have to do with past generations culturally transmitting their values to us and the social institutions teaching us hidden curriculum (Carl 50, 94) For instance, in school whenever we see the American flag, we immediately put our right hand over our heart and say the pledge of allegiance.

If we don't do it, the America. By not placing our right hand over our heart, we would be considered deviant towards America. (Introduction to the Sociology of Deviance) Growing up, cheers and parents teach us to be proud of your culture and nation. As you can see, both the nature and nurture aspects come into play when we react towards a norm either being "broken" or "obeyed". To get a better understanding of breaking a norm, I had to experience what it was like to break a norm.

My task was simple; I am to only speak Toga, a native Filipino language. But the problem was who, where and when am I going to break my norm. Luckily, my friend Alyssa, who I have known for three years, wanted to meet with me for a day of catching up as we shop at various malls, local boutiques and stores in the San Diego area. I only speak English to Alyssa. So I thought this would be the perfect time for me to break my norm. However, to really comprehend the power of norms in society, I decided to perform the task on strangers too.

Now with my mission already planned out, all I had to do was put into action; I had to only speak in Toga to my friend, Alyssa and strangers I encounter during my one-day visit to San Diego. My experience in my norm breaking experiment, I realized the norm of speaking a language other than English, people react and look at you as if you were an alien. To be honest, I did expect people to react in this manner. However, I was blindsided by the incident in the Anthropologist store. For me, growing up in a different country and traveling exposed me to the norms of different cultures.

I find myself learning something new; that does not mean I conform to the behavior or lifestyle. But I accept norms that I am not familiar with and have an open mind. But not everyone is accepting of different cultures or lifestyles, they are not familiar with. A huge percent of people in any society would feel uncomfortable and try to steer clear to those that are different from what they are used to. Society tends to judge and criticize things because it's to something they are used to or exposed to.

We have all experienced or witnessed something that was different from the way we live or behave, so we feel uncomfortable in the situation. We can change that, every society should look with a culturally relativistic perspective. We don't have to accept their behavior, but that does not mean, we should judge the way someone acts or behaves in life. We have to be open-minded and make an effort, rather than be in an ethnocentric perspective (Carl 54). This world consists of diverse cultures and lifestyles, we all could learn from one another. Man has the ability to expand his knowledge.