

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Facebook Fitness Groups and Exercise Motivation

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Adults do not get enough moderate exercise on a regular basis. Physical activity has been identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (6%), following high blood pressure (13%), tobacco use (9%), and high blood glucose (6%). Overweight and obesity are responsible for 5% of global mortality (World Health Organizations, 2011). Although adults know that exercise is important to their health, many struggle to meet the recommended frequency or duration for physical activity that is needed to improve cardiorespiratory health (such as coronary heart disease, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and hypertension); metabolic health (diabetes and obesity); bone health and osteoporosis; breast and colon cancer; and depression (World Health Organization, 2011).

Physical activity recommendations for adults ages 18-64 include at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity throughout the week, or at least 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity throughout the week, or a combination of both moderate and vigorous activity. Additionally, muscle strengthening activities should be done involving major muscle groups on two or more days a week (World Health Organization, 2011). Lack of motivation to perform and keep up these physical activities on a consistent basis can have detrimental effects on general health.

Social media can influence the amount of exercise people engage in, (Hefner et al, 2016) but more research must be done to determine which social media platforms and features work best. In this research we explore to what extent Facebook groups are a positive influence on motivation and frequency for exercise in adults. The health-conscious public, health sciences professionals, and medical professionals could utilize the results of this information to help their clients achieve healthier, longer lives. Additionally, the findings of this research could be applied to psychological motivation in other areas such as project work motivation, task motivation, and study motivation.