

The Influence of Gender Roles and Norms on the Physical Activity of South Asian Women and Girls: A Scoping Review

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INTRODUCTION

- Low levels of physical activity (PA) is a known risk factor of cardiovascular disease and may lead to diabetes and obesity
- South Asians have ↑ CVD & diabetes but ↓ PA
- SA women and girls' PA levels may be influenced by gender roles and norms across their lifetime.

Study Aim:

Describe the literature on the impact of gender roles and norms on PA among SA women and girls living in the U.S.A, U.K. or Canada.

METHODS

Databases: PubMed, Google Scholar, CINAHL, and PsycInfo

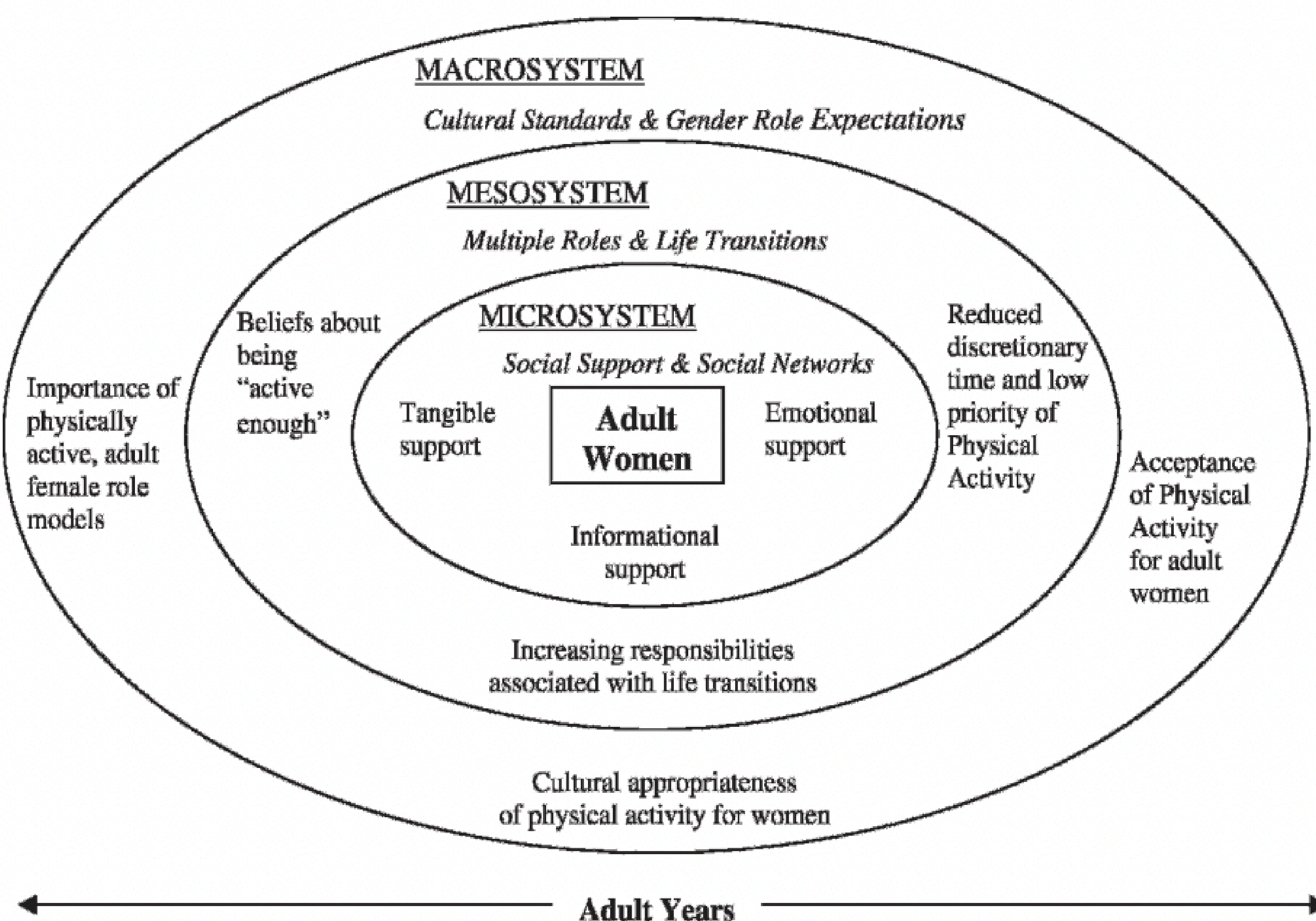
Inclusion Criteria:

- Gender-specific barriers or facilitators of PA
- Sample = South Asian women and girls
- South Asian = Asian Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nepali, or Sri Lankan background
- Location = Canada, the U.S., and United Kingdom

Number of Articles: 1,768 articles extracted and 13 included

Analysis: Themes were identified and categorized based on three levels of influence according to Figure 1 framework:

Figure 1: Vrazel et al. Model of Social-Environmental Influences on the Physical Activity of Adult Women

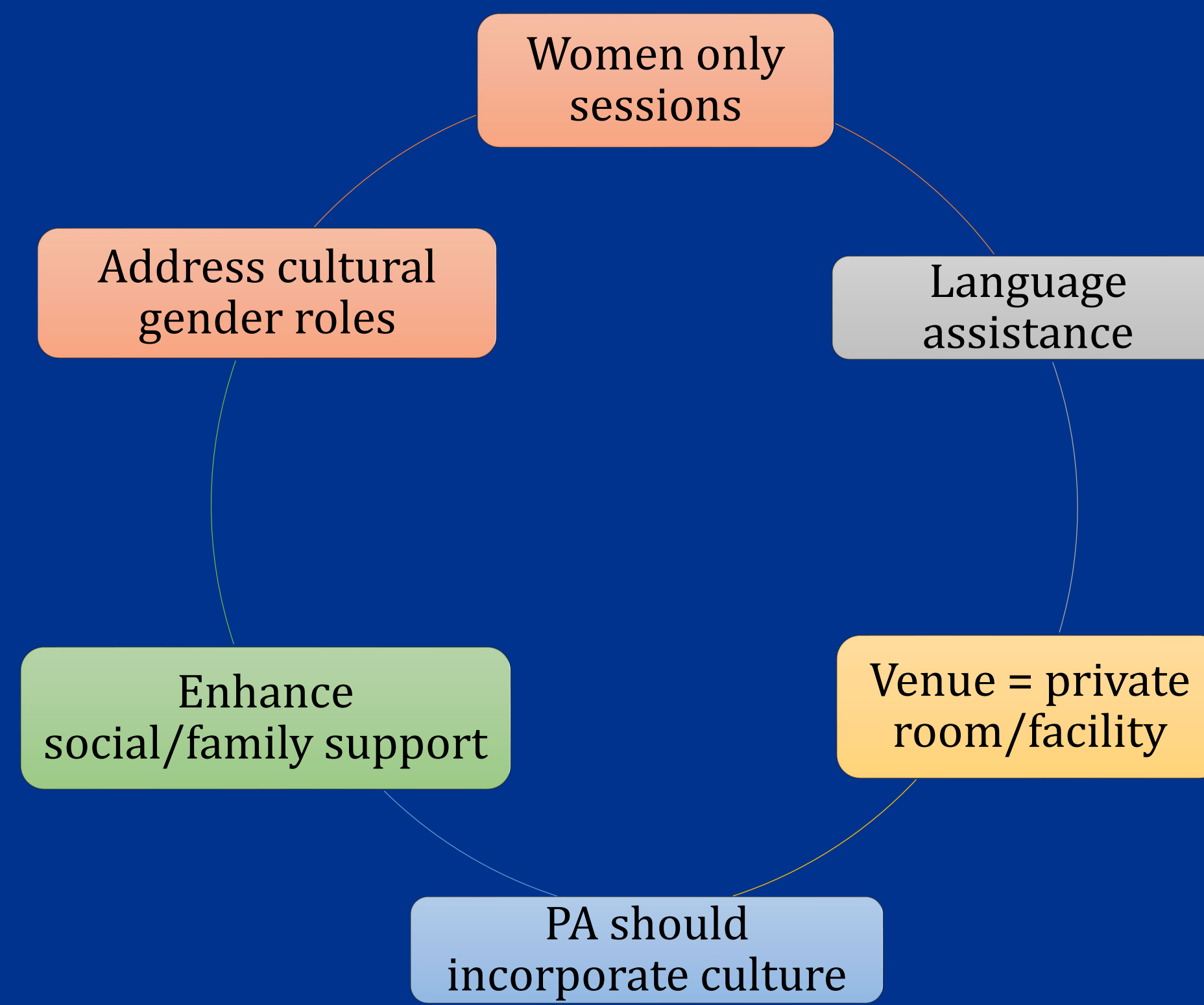


CONCLUSION

More likely to engage in western forms of PA

- Are second-generation women
- Women who are supported by their husbands
- Girls who are supported by their parents
- Women with strong English skills & greater acculturation
- Have a higher education level or received education in a western country

Figure 3: Factors needed to increase the PA of SA women and girls



FUTURE IMPLICATIONS



The **South Asians Active Together (SAATH)** is an intervention study in its first year of recruitment. Many of the facilitators identified in this review are measured in the assessments.

Study Design:

- Inclusion criteria = SA sedentary mothers with daughters who are 11-16
- 18-week group exercise classes (intervention) or education mailings (control)
- Languages = English, Hindi, Urdu, or Gujarati
- 1 mother & daughter pair = 1 dyad

Recruitment Goal = 160 dyads (n=320)

Current = 62 dyads (n=124)

Measured variables:

- Change in daily moderate/vigorous intensity PA levels
- Intergenerational interactions between mother & daughters
- Self-efficacy, Asian self-identity, family support
- Riverside Acculturation Stress Inventory

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RESULTS

Table 1: Reported study details from identified articles

Designs	Location	Sample Characteristics
Qualitative (n=10) Mixed-Methods (n=3)	United States (n=5) United Kingdom (n=5) Canada (n=3)	Asian Indian (n=9) Pakistani (n=7) Bangladeshi (n=3) Sri Lankan (n=2)
		Women (n=11) Girls (n=2)

Figure 2: Synthesized Quotes from Identified Articles

MICROSYSTEM	MESOSYSTEM	MACROSYSTEM
<p>"...a relief dietitian had done [an educational talk] and didn't know much about the Asian diet and suggested dhal, and that is seen as what poor people eat and a bit of a slur that she was saying that they should eat that." (Interactions with instructor)</p> <p>"It [group activity] is like family entertainment. You feel relaxed, not rushed, not worried about dinner will be late...." (Support system)</p> <p>"Parents are the most important. If the parents do it, that's the only way the children can learn." (Support system)</p>	<p>"I'd say it's mostly diet to be honest 'cause it's just eating too much sugar isn't it [...] I don't think exercise is as responsible cause' when I think of diabetes I just think of sugar and food it's what goes into our bodies" (Beliefs about PA)</p> <p>"...You have to live the American way here, a lot of [Indians], I think, they come from there, but they don't change, and you know, they still cling to the Indian way of doing things" (Acculturation)</p>	<p>"...the woman is viewed as "the lowest priority" in the family unit who sacrifices herself for the needs of the other family members" (Cultural gender roles)</p> <p>"not the Sikh thing to do" (Cultural view of PA)</p> <p>"Bollywood is part of my culture-I have grown up with music as part of my heritage. This dance connected me to my heritage/roots" (Culturally appropriate PA)</p>

Table 2: Identified facilitators and barriers found to promote or prevent PA in SA women and girls

Facilitators	Barriers
<p><u>Microsystem</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support system [most common] • Informational system 	<p><u>Microsystem</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No support system • No informational support • Negative interactions with instructor
<p><u>Mesosystem</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities towards others • Higher acculturation levels • Being second-generation 	<p><u>Mesosystem</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low English skills • Multiple roles • Beliefs about PA • Being first-generation
<p><u>Macrosystem</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally appropriate PA • Culturally appropriate venue 	<p><u>Macrosystem</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural gender roles [most common] • Cultural priorities • Cultural view of PA • Religious view • Cultural view of modesty