Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

“Healthy teenage years are significantly important towards a lifetime of being physically fit”.¹

Despite the well-known health benefits of fitness and exercise, most of the adults, as well as children, are not active enough to achieve them. Health-care specialists and researchers talk about lack of exercise as an epidemic due to unhealthy lifestyle, dietary changes, lack of physical activity and overweight.²

Humans are meant for only one thing—to move. Yet our society has uncountable reason to prevent movement and bring comfort to life. Our children have access to every "labor-saving" device that exists, and are, being exposed to potential overweight, illness, and physiological deterioration. Physical inactivity is potentially creating problems among school age children, coupled with the rise of childhood obesity and the early onset of diabetes; the call for getting students engaged in an enjoying physical activity is urgency. The looming question, however, is how to bring motivation and a positive attitude towards physical activity that will create a desire to be physically active in and outside of school and throughout their life. Physical education and sports can play an important role in developing an interest and appreciation of activity. This will lead to the development of a positive attitude and a sense of efficiency as a participant in physical activity. If a student has a positive experience on field that will develops a positive

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attitude about physical activity and he will feels competent about himself as a movers, motivation to engage in activity outside of school will likely follow him.  

Physical education lessons in school could play an indispensable role in the promotion of positive attitude towards physical activities and a healthy lifestyle. In general basic goal of physical education is to develop a healthy life style and attitudes that promote lifelong physical activity and healthful living. Students with a more positive attitude toward physical education are more likely to participate in physical activity. Therefore, it is important to know the students’ attitudes toward physical education. Moreover, knowing teachers and principal attitudes toward physical education ensures that they further enhance participation of physical education process and enjoyment of the activities so that people join and attend classes willingly. Teachers and principals are the one team and they create the right atmosphere in the school. They are the one who bring the right situation and motivate the students. So, it is very important that they should have the positive attitude towards physical education. This helps students to improve their cognitive and kinesthetic skills in physical education programs. Adolescence is the period to form attitude and shape their future habits. If positive attitudes toward physical education and physical activity are not promoted in school years, they may never be adopted. Therefore many more researches are required concerning attitudes with adolescents, which can provide important results for physical education teachers in particular and everyone else in general.

Though this study is conducted on both genders it is important to know that gender and age variables play an important role in determination of attitude towards

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physical education. It is interesting to know that gender plays an important mediating role in attitudes toward physical education, because physical education curriculum experience is significantly different for boys and girls. There are some contradictory reports, some says girls have more favorable attitudes than boys, while others have proved that boys have more positive attitudes than girls, and some studies proved no difference at all. As children grow, the effect of their parents, teachers or principals, on the attitudes of children and the role of other social factors gradually increases particularly during adolescence period. 12 to 30 year is the period to shape the attitude and they changes slightly after this period. Some studies related to attitudes toward physical education in relation to age have reported mixed findings. Despite most of the studies proved that attitudes declined as grade level increases and there are a few studies proved the exact opposite or proved no change in the attitudes toward physical education as grade level increased. According to Montalvo research has indicated that attitude has influence on youth’s future participation and students who exhibit unfavorable feelings toward physical education may refrain from engaging physical activity outside school. Due to these reasons analyzing youths’ attitude carries importance.¹

It is a matter of investigation to find the best way of influencing young people to adopt healthy life-styles? Since it is in our school years that the basic habits and attitudes that form adult life are established, this is the age on which our efforts should be focused. The attitudes of each individual reveal how positive or negative he is in coping with a problem as well as how broad a view of things he takes. A positive stance is conducive to positive behavior. The results of recent inquiries into children’s dietary habits, their

¹ErturanIlker, and ArslanDemirhan,(1995) “An examination of Turkish high school students’ attitude towards physical education with regards to gender and age level”. Unpublished Master’s thesis, Pamukkale University, School of Sport Sciences and Technology, Denizli, Turkey.
participation in physical activities, the rapid increase in the number of teenage smokers and the general increase in stress in their lives are particularly matter of concern. Research has shown that while the number of obese and overweight teenagers has tripled over the last twenty years, physical activity has decreased in this time. As a matter of fact the sharpest drop in physical activity occurring during the transition from childhood to adolescence. As far as the health-damaging habits are concerned, it is acquired in adolescence, giving rise not just to health problems but to behavioral ones as well.

Research carried out on Mexican-American adolescents concluded that smokers were more likely to become involved with behavior that put to risk their health and safety than non-smokers. In Europe 30 out of a hundred adolescents are smokers. In the U.S.A. and Canada, in spite of the fact that there has been a significant reduction in the number of smokers in the general population over recent decades, this does not hold true for adolescents. Teenage bad behaviors tend to avoid exercise and healthy food and tend to team up with kids who are mixed up in drug-taking and with violence. Another important factor which has a negative effect on teenagers’ physical and mental health is stress. The way in which a young person copes with the stress in his life immediately relates to his psychological adjustment. Research carried out on American adolescents confirmed that there was a direct link between levels of stress and the resort to different substances, including tobacco. It has been proved and science have cleared that involvement in physical activities lowers stress levels and is a positive factor in the development of healthy behavior. It has also been observed that the more positive a person’s attitude towards exercise is the more positive will be his attitude towards a healthy diet.5

Regular physical exercise is extremely important for maintaining a healthy body, improving psychological well-being, and preventing diseases such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and heart disease. Despite the well-known health benefits of fitness and exercise, most of the adults, as well as children, are not striving hard enough to achieve them. Health-care specialists and researchers talk about lack of exercise as an epidemic due to unhealthy lifestyle, dietary changes, lack of physical activities and overweight. Nationwide surveys show that children are not at appropriate fitness level associated with health standards. We live in the society that loves media: television, video, computers etc., Media plays one of the most important roles in our lives, but they don’t help much to encourage us to live healthy. According to the research made by California Project LEAN (2004), 91% of advertised food is high in fats, sugars, and salt.\(^6\)

Attitude are formed by people as a result of some kinds of learning experience if the experience is favorable a positive attitude is found and vice versa. The attitude people hold can frequently determine the way they act in person and larger situation. For this reason, administrators, psychologists and sociologists are concerned with attitude development, how they affect behavior and how they can be changed. This is the cross road physical education as an academic subject finds itself. Researches have shown that most parents are not happy to hear their children and wards talk about physical education and sports. Parents need to know about the academic programmes in physical education. Some non-physical education lecturers at the colleges of education, and Universities believe that physical education is not for bright students, they saw it to be for the academic drop outs, even parents often say “I do not send you to school to go and play sports, football or jumping and running on the field”.

It was believed that attitudes which arouse behavior and sustain or terminate an activity and progress, they regulate an organized behavior and they lead to the acquisition of motives and stable disposition to act. In support of this, several attempts have been made to identify teachers or students’ attitudes towards teaching and learning of physical education as a science subject but no much positive results has been achieved. It is stated that researchers should as a matter of urgency investigate some means by which desirable changes in the attitudes of principals, teachers and students could be fostered and induced for the acceptance of physical education as an academic subject. Academic scholars may concur with the scholar that the objectives of any science curricular includes fostering favorable attitudes towards science and imparting cognitive knowledge which physical education as a science course is doing in this time. Physical education at the advance levels (under and post graduate levels) studies is housing specialization courses like “Sports Medicine; Exercise Physiology; Sports Equipment Technology; Sports Facilities Engineering; Human Anatomy and Physiology in Sports; Sports Management; Sports Psychology; Sports Marketing; Sport Law; Sport Insurance; among others.\(^7\)

Attitudes develop at an early age and can be changed based on situational contexts such as a particular teacher or the class environment. In fact, a student's attitude toward a particular subject in school can be shaped by his/her perception of the teacher or principal philosophy. Attitudes toward physical activity and perceptions about physical education classes are important to understand as they can influence an individual's decision to begin or to continue participation in an activity. Attitudes refer to a set of beliefs that an

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\(^7\)Orunaboka, Tamunobelema Tammy , (2011) ,Attitude of Nigeria Secondary School Students towards Physical Education as a Predictor of Achievement in the Subject , Journal of Education and Practice ,Vol 2, No 6, ,Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, p.71
individual holds towards a certain object, activity or person. Attitudes are complex in that they may be transient or fixed and are influenced by wide variety of factors.  

Many studies have concluded that there is a positive attitude towards physical education and participation in physical activity. This is the reason why students attitude towards physical education and all those factors which influence those activities should be considered. It has been proved that middle school physical education always attempts to provide programs that encourage the early adolescent to engage in consistent pattern of physical activity. Attitudes toward Physical Education, Student attitudes toward physical education has been under investigation for very long time. Traditionally, the purpose of such inquiry has been to identify factors that contribute to positive and negative feelings toward physical education. Investigators believed that having such information would improve the quality of physical education by allowing teachers to consider student insights when making curricular or program decisions. Subsequently, research in this area has been plentiful. The preponderance of attention, however, has focused on college. Few studies have been conducted on junior high and middle school students and have been found that a positive attitude towards physical education is strongest at the 6th grade level for both genders. With each passing grade, however, attitudes toward physical education become less favorable. Although this attitudinal decline transpires in both genders, it is more severe in girls. The identification of possible factors which contribute to students overall attitude towards physical education have varied. In one of the earliest studies in this topic, while attempting to identify specific annoyances that lead students to have negative feelings toward physical education, discovered that boys with positive attitudes towards physical education were most irritated by the personal hygiene of the physical

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education teacher (e.g. smell of tobacco on the breath of the teacher). Conversely, boys who were categorized as having a poor attitude by their teacher were most annoyed with the requirement of having to take physical education. In recent studies it is found that winning, success, good performance, being included, teamwork, participating and having fun as the factors which many middle and high school students associate with positive physical education experiences. On the other hand, negative experiences related to fitness exercises and injuries.⁹

It is extremely important to understand high school students' attitudes and the way they perceive toward physical education. They are the future members of the society who will need to use their knowledge to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Preparing our nation's future to meet the demands of the society by acquiring the knowledge and skills to be successful and productive citizens has been the focal point of the recent educational reform movement. Peer influence is a factor affecting attitudes toward high school physical education. The students appeared to engage in more active behavior in physical education classes when they received interest and positive reinforcement from their friends. They also have negative influence of peers who did not dress for class and their direct impacts are on off-field behavior.

Despite research on high school students' attitudes toward physical education, no studies have been found which have a focus on student attitudes toward physical education in relation to a curriculum driven by state content standards. While content standards are intended to assure that all students meet minimum curricular requirements, if students do not find a need for physical education in their lives or do not find it valuable, the content standards possibly may have no meaning in their lives either. These attitudes may lead to avoidance behavior or disruptive behavior in the classroom.

⁹Ibid p.13
Physical activity and physical fitness proved to be an important aspect of physical education curriculum. There is some evidence that suggest that students who show unfavorable feeling towards physical education or have had negative experience in physical education may also discourage from any form of physical activity outside of school or in later life. Therefore, one can see that student opinion of what is taught in physical education and the activity related to physical fitness are the combining factors towards the epidemic of today’s unhealthy and obese youth.  

School education is designed to provide opportunity for learning that extends beyond the home. Physical education is just one of the subject area included in providing this opportunity. Sound practices in physical education program have included developmental appropriateness in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor deed. These developmentally appropriate practices included teacher language and interaction that will foster quality learning environment. The implementation of appropriate teaching practice in physical education can contribute to increasing the quality and value of physical education outcomes.

The attitude of the Principal reflects upon the function of school and over the teachers. Teachers of other subjects also influence a lot the attitude of the students. School and school leadership do make a difference too. There are important and indispensable characteristics of effective school attributable to leadership. Meaningful school improvement begins with cultural change and cultural change always initiated by school leader. The most effective school principals are able to collaboratively create and

10 F.DanielGrigal,(1999) “Relationship Between Student’s Attitudes Towards Physical Fitness Testing And Their Fitness Level” Kean University Union, New jersey,p.5.
sustain changes that continually enhance students’ achievement. Effective leader is one who creates a culture of success, provides support and resources and has a vision of long term sustainability.

One of the most important responsibilities of a Secondary School Principal is that of providing leadership which will result in the most favorable environment for learning and the most effective curriculum and instruction planning and design to meet the educational needs of students. This leadership must be provided in such a way that it involves the faculty, community and also students in those activities which are basic to the program and to the instructional improvement. The Secondary School Principal is an important public administrator without whose leadership and help, these little significant improvements cannot occur in the school.

The attitudes, values and perception of teachers combine to form a belief systems is unique to every teacher. Some teachers have different belief system regarding the relative importance of various goals for physical education. These varied belief systems influence teacher curricular and instructional decision and ultimate students’ learning. Every teacher’s attitudes and value towards teaching compose educational value orientation. Value orientations are characterized by the importance of critical components of the teaching-learning process to the teacher. The unique school context also influences teacher’s attitude and instructional behavior. Thus, the nature of the context and the nature of teacher’s attitude and beliefs related to physical education affect the implementation of a curriculum and student learning program.12

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In physical education and sports the use of questionnaire has many advantages especially when it is necessary to know the player’s attitude towards coaches, towards physical activity and sports, towards the system of training, towards federation official etc. It is said that the success of a profession like physical education, to a great extend depends upon the people’s attitude towards it. The result of attitude study at a given point of time determines whether necessary changes or modification should be brought about to improve existing programs and practices. Questionnaire is a good devise in research where it may be fruitful to spot out lacuna in the existing practice in health, physical education, recreation and sports.\(^{13}\)

In attempting to elevate itself in 20\(^{th}\) century, Thailand has made many plans for national development. The use of physical education and sports is seen now as more valuable for the national building process than it previously had been. Many sports organizations have been established to fulfill this plan. Professional education institutions such as ministry of education, college of physical education and many universities emphasize physical education and sports discipline by seeking better program for students, improved facilities and government support. A number of sports organizations have been patronized by HM THE KING OF THAILAND. It is evident that HM the King and HER royal highness the Princess UbolRatna have kindly set a good example to the people of kingdom by taking part in SEA and Asian championship. Physical education has been included in the national education process since the first national scheme of education of Thailand was stipulated in 1932. It was revised in 1936, 1951, 1960 and 1977 to further improvement. During the fifth national economic and social development plan

(1982-1986), physical education and sports and recreation have been considered as among the most important instrument for the development of the kingdom.

Thailand is a country among the ASEAN nation. The majority of the people are Thai and there are other ethnic groups from South East Asia. Thai culture stems from the Buddhist view. The aim of Buddhism is not to shape life in the world, but to teach liberation, release from the world. The Buddhist attempt to attain inner peace (Nirvana) through self-development is understood as an absolutely personal performance of the single individual. This perspective shows why Thai traditional educators or literates, educated in the Buddhist temples, had not paid attention to Western science. However, the Buddhist principle of no-self teaches Thais that they should not be strongly attached to things. Everything is changing. This is the reason why Thai people are very flexible and pragmatic and why Thai society can easily accept foreign culture. (Wisadavet, 1996)¹⁴

Moral education in Thailand is based on religion, mainly Buddhism - including Thai identity and tradition and economic and social development. Some of these aspects can be supportive of teaching and learning science, but some of them can be obstructive. With globalization, Thailand has accelerated economic growth during the late 1990s. The expansion of export-oriented industries has contributed to the high rate of economic growth. This growth needs lots of expertise resources. With a growing requirement for people in the industries, the educational institutions must produce people to serve in those industries. Technical expertise is the fastest solution to rapidly expanding industries and the best solution in the long run. The economic factors affect the value of education. The

ways of learning science follow the prescriptions of scientific knowledge in the same way that the technician comes to the forefront (Hongladarom, 2002).\footnote{Hodson, D. & Hodson, J. (1998). From constructivism to social constructivism: A Vygotskian perspective on teaching and learning science. \textit{School Science Review}, P.79.}

Because of the globalization of energy issues, students’ ideas about energy-related science, technology, and society issues when comparing Western and non-Western schools might contrast in how they perceive energy, and how they regard the kind of society into which they may emerge. A comparison between Thai and New Zealand students’ ideas might reveal existing different and similar student perceptions of the relationships of science (energy), technology and society across the two contexts. This study gives empirical data of a cross-cultural perspective on science teaching that has implications for the development of teaching approaches around the world.\footnote{Chockchai Yuenyong, Alister Jones and Naruemon Yutakom, “A comparison of Thailand and New Zealand students – Ideas about energy related to technological and societal issues”. The Institute for Promotion Science and Technology Teaching; and the Graduate School, Unpublished Thesis, Kasetsart University, Thailand.}

Beginning of educational reform in Thailand is the result of the 1999 National education act, enacted on 20\textsuperscript{th} August, 1999. The ultimate goal of this Act is to develop Thai people (learners) to be good, competent and happy in order to live in harmony with other people in the society. One of the three principles of educational provision is that all strata of society shall come together to participate in boosting education. With the conviction that all learners have the capacity to learn on their own initiative, the appropriate methods of teaching should focus on a student-centered approach. Teachers should develop their ability to effectively facilitate such learning by learning also through conducting action research. In addition, the new teacher system recognized the importance of teacher learning, development and training. All teachers need to learn and to be trained on a continuous basis, supported by government and other funds.
Educational system in Thailand is divided into two levels: basic education and higher education. The present basic education system is a 6:3:3 system, consisting of 6 years of primary education, 3 years of lower secondary education and 3 years of upper secondary education. Higher education is divided into two levels: lower than degree level and degree level. English Language is taught from beginning, from the basic education to higher education level. It is classified as the first foreign language, being very important for students in their further study or work.

All together both public and private schools in basic education is 52,510, with 47,203 providing pre-primary education, 32,475 providing primary education, 11,124 providing lower secondary level and 3,173 providing upper secondary level. In higher education, the total number of education institutions is 977, with 887 offering lower than degree level programs, 197 offering bachelor degree, and 231 offering more advanced programs. The total number of students in basic education (K-12) is 15.2 million. There are 2.5 in pre-primary, 5.7 in primary, 2.7 in lower secondary and 1.8 in upper secondary level. The teacher/student ratio is 1:21 (OEC, 2007). But the real ratio is quite different, we might say about 1:40, because many ‘teachers’ have to be responsible for other responsibilities as financial affairs, activities affairs, etc., instead of teaching students. Thus, another big problem being faced are trying to solve teacher shortage and the use of out-of-field teachers, who are teaching subjects outside of the field of their own higher education preparation. This is certainly the case with English teachers, with less than 20% of those teaching English having degrees in the field of English language.

Introduction to Thailand school curriculum: Schools in Thailand in general teach English language following the 2001 Basic Education Curriculum established by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, which is presently under the
Office of the Basic Education Commission (BEC). In the basic education curriculum structure, there are 8 subject groups; foreign language is one of these eight groups. English is the core foreign language curriculum. At the primary school level, the only foreign language is English, with students studying English around 3-4 periods per week. At the secondary level there are many foreign languages such as English, Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Arabic and etc. However, English continues to be the first foreign language and students must study English 4-5 periods per week, while other languages are optional. The content of foreign language includes, for example, topics such as: Language for Communication; Language and Culture; Language and other Academic Subject Groups; Relationships and Language including both within Community and in World Relationships. Included in the subject of Language for Communication, teachers teach all four basic language skills to students: listening and reading, speaking and writing.

According to the NEA, schools and teachers in Thailand are able to adapt and modify the curriculum to meet the needs of local community. In addition to that, they should try to create activities consistent with the practical life circumstances of the learners, and also encourage critical thinking skills of their students as well. But in reality, it is not easy for teachers to follow the philosophy and principles of learner centered learning of the NEA due to the teachers’ limited time, work load, unfamiliarity with team-teaching and their own limited ability to use of English language.

For many years the Thai Government has recognized the importance of English Language and allowed the Ministry of Education to develop English Language Education in accordance with world trends. The Ministry has announced the policies for the promotion and improvement of English Language capabilities in Thailand are as follows:
1. International schools: Since 1957 the Thai government has allowed International schools to be opened. Initially, the only students who could enroll in international schools were non-Thai nationality, or children of Thais who had been living abroad with their parents or otherwise studying abroad. Gradually, international schools have also been allowed Thai students to enroll, up to 50% of their student enrollment. These Thai students learn to use English fluently, but realistically, the number of students who can study in International schools is too small due to the prohibitive costs and limited capacity of these schools.

2. English Curriculum: In 1995, the MOE announced that English is the first foreign language for the Thai school system, and in 1996 the English Curriculum was implemented. This curriculum stated that all schools could teach English beginning at the Prathomsuksa 1 (primary 1) level, in both public and private schools across the country. In reality, most of schools continue to start teaching English at Prathomsuksa 3 (Primary 3), due to the lack of English teachers and other reasons, but there are some primary schools that have been able to arrange activities with easy English for the young children in order to try to develop English skills from early childhood.

3. English program (E.P) schools: In 1995, the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) began to launch English Program in schools which were ready to provide this program throughout the country. These are known as “E.P. schools” or sometimes they are called “bilingual schools”. This kind of schools uses English as a medium of instruction.

   There are typically about four subjects taught in English in E.P. schools, such as Science, Mathematics, English and Physical Health Education, while other subjects will be taught in Thai such as Thai Language, Social Studies etc. EP programs are usually
expensive in nature, because they hire native English speakers from abroad. This makes the parents to pay higher fee.\textsuperscript{17}

Indian school curriculum - In India, secondary school students have to take physical education as a compulsory subject, though they tend to neglect it due to examination pressure.

Thus the present investigation has been undertaken to study the attitudes of The Principals, Teachers and Secondary school students of Thailand and India towards Physical Education.

\textbf{Statement of the Problem}

This study investigated and compared the attitude of principals, teachers and secondary school students of Thailand and India towards physical education.

\textbf{Delimitation}

1. The study was delimited to the secondary schools (grade 10-12) of India and Thailand.

2. The study was delimited to 60 school Principals (30 from each country), 150 teachers (75 from each country) (physical education & other subjects) 300 students (150 from each country) of different secondary schools of India and Thailand.

**Limitation**

Though all efforts were made to bring uniformity in the studies, limitation of the studies could be:

1. Language barrier and perception of questionnaire by the subjects.
2. The limitation of the questionnaire, and
3. The individual’s personal motivations to fill the questionnaire truly.

**Hypothesis**

On the basis of available literature and the scholar’s experience it was hypothesized that:

1) Principals of both countries are likely to have positive attitude towards physical education.
2) Teachers of both countries are likely to have positive attitudes towards physical education.
3) Secondary school Students of both countries are also likely to have positive attitudes towards physical education.

**Definition and Explanation of the Terms**

**Attitude**

An attitude is a psychological construct or latent variable, inferred from observable responses to stimuli, which is assumed to mediate consistency and co-variation among their responses.\(^\text{18}\)

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According to Woodworth, “An attitude is a set or disposition, readiness, inclination, tendency to act towards an object according to its characteristics so far as we are acquainted with them.”

**Physical Education**

Physical education is a process by which changes in individual are brought about through movement experience.

Physical Education is the integral part of the total education process, is a field of Endeavour that has its aim for the development of physically, mentally, emotionally, socially fit citizen through the medium of physical activities that have been selected with a view to realizing the outcomes.

**Significance of the Study**

1. This study may help to develop positive attitude towards physical education.

2. This study may help to investigate and compare the principals’, teachers’ and secondary school students’ attitude towards physical education.

3. The study may help to uncover a possible relationship between age, gender and family background of participating students, and their attitudes toward being physically active.

4. This study may help to acquire findings that will help parents as well as teachers to better understand the students’ feelings, opinions, and behaviors.

5. This may help in making policies and program for physical education in both the countries.

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