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SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ATTITUDES  
TOWARD PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitude of Malaysian secondary school students toward physical activity, age 16, in Senior Methodist Girls' School, Kuala Lumpur. The dependent variable of this study is attitude in terms of the six perceived sub-domains of physical activity. The sub-domains are: physical activity as an aesthetic experience; physical activity as catharsis; physical activity as a pursuit of vertigo; physical activity for health and fitness; physical activity as a social experience and physical activity as an ascetic experience. The independent variables are academic fields of study (Arts and Science) and athletic experience of the students.

The student's background questionnaire in this study was designed to obtain information on the independent variables of the students. The other instrument used in this study to gather information on the dependent variable was the adapted version of Kenyon's multi-dimensional Attitude toward Physical Activity Inventory (ATPA) for females with 54 items in it. Both instruments were administered to 212 students but only 166 of the returned questionnaires were usable for analysis. Two research hypotheses and three research questions were formulated to investigate the aim of this study.

The students' attitude toward physical activity was analyzed using descriptive statistics. T-test was used to determine the existence of any significant differences between the attitude mean scores in the six sub-domains when a comparison of academic

field of study and athletic status of the students were taken into consideration and to test the hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of confidence.

The results of this study indicated that generally the students in this study had positive attitudes toward physical activity as a social experience; as an ascetic experience; as a cathartic function and as an aesthetic experience. Findings also showed that the students generally indicated neither positive nor negative attitudes toward physical activity as a pursuit of vertigo (thrill and excitement) and physical activity for health and fitness. In this study a significant difference was found between the Science and Arts students' attitudinal scores toward physical activity as a pursuit of vertigo which favours the Science students which in other words the science students indicated positive attitudes toward this particular domain. A significant difference was also found between the athletes and non-athletes' attitudinal scores toward physical activity as a social experience, favouring the athletes. The findings also indicated that the attitudes of the students in general can be affected significantly which in other words gave an insight as to what future actions to take to improve the quality of physical education to promote physical activity in schools.

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