

# GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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## Abstract

*The purpose of the study was to find out the gender differences in attitude towards physical activity of School Students in Tirunelveli. To achieve the purpose of the study, a total of 600 subjects (Boys =300, Girls= 300) were selected randomly as subjects from School, Tirunelveli District. The age of the subjects ranged from 13 to 19 years. The selected subjects were divided into three groups according to their age. Each group consisted of 100 subjects. Attitude towards physical activity was selected as dependent variables for this study and it was tested by using Wears Attitude towards Physical Activity Inventors (Simon & Small, 1974). It was concluded that, there was a significant difference exists among the three different age groups and between the boys and girls on attitude towards physical activity. It was found that Under 19 Years boys groups were better in attitude towards physical activity when compared to the other two age groups such as under 17 and under 14 Years. It also found that, in girls, Under 19 Years of age group showed better performance in attitude towards physical activity when compared to Under 17 Years and Under 14 Years.*

## INTRODUCTION

Researchers in the field of Physical Education (PE) indicated that identifying and understanding the factors that are associated with children's physical activity participation are critical to the promotion of current and lifelong physical activity participation (Chung and Phillips, 2002; Ding et al., 2006; Sallis et al., 2000). Among many factors, the children's attitude is considered to be a key factor that influences physical activity participation (Chung, M. and D.A. Phillips, 2002; Ding et al., 2006; Hagger et al., 1997; Solmon, 2003).

Rikard and Banville (2006) stated that attitudes are born from beliefs that one's has about him or herself and things. Attitudes shape ones' behaviors in many ways and determine ones' involvement in him or her daily activities (Rikard and Banville, 2006).

Strand and Scantling (1994) pointed out that people express their beliefs and attitudes daily through behaviors and language. In PE, obtaining students' insight into their beliefs is a critical source for understanding their attitudes and their interests and involvement toward their PE program (Strand and Scantling, 1994).

Developed a theoretical framework for a rational action, their framework further explained attitudes flow come from beliefs and yield intentions and actions. The first determinant is the individual's positive or negative evaluations for performing the behavior; It just as Silverman and Subramaniam (1999) indicated: generally, with positive beliefs one will have a favorable attitude toward the object of the beliefs; otherwise one will possess an unfavorable attitude toward the object of the beliefs.

## Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was to find out the gender differences in attitude towards physical activity of School Students in Tirunelveli. The subordinate problem of the study was to find age differences within as well as between the gender also analyzed related to the selected psychological variables.

## Methodology

To achieve the purpose of the study, a total of 600 subjects (Boys =300, Girls= 300) were selected randomly as subjects from School, Tirunelveli District. The age of the subjects ranged from 13 to 19 years. The selected subjects were divided into three groups according to their age. Each group consisted of 100 subjects. Attitude towards physical activity was selected as dependent variables for this study and it was tested by using Wears Attitude towards Physical Activity Inventors (Simon & Small, 1974).

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### Analysis of Data

The results of independent variables on each criterion variable are analyzed and presented below. The mean values of boys and girls in different age groups on attitude towards physical activity are graphically represented in the figure I.

**TABLE I**  
**THE MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OF BOYS AND GIRLS IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS**

Groups		Under 14 Years	Under 17 Years	Under 19 Years
Boys	Mean	55.01	90.45	121.22
	SD	6.11	12.14	9.12
Girls	Mean	74.12	95.42	118.41
	SD	9.41	11.14	12.12

(Attitude towards Physical Activity scores are expressed in numbers).

**TABLE II**  
**TWO-FACTOR ANOVA ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OF BOYS AND GIRLS IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-ratio
A factor (Gender category)	1050.35	1	1380.52	0.29
B factor (Age Groups)	928635.51	2	464317.76	98.41*
AB factor (Interaction) (Gender category and Age)	28642.42	2	14321.21	3.04*
Error I	934194.96	198	4718.16	

\*Significant at .05 level. Table values required for significance at 0.05 level with df 1 and 198 & 2 and 198 are 3.89 and 3.04 respectively.

**TABLE III**  
**THE SIMPLE EFFECT TEST SCORES OF GENDER (ROWS) AND THREE AGE GROUPS (COLUMNS) ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-ratio
Gender category and Under 14 Years	20207.21	1	20207.21	38.81*
Gender category and Under 17 Years	116.16	1	116.16	0.22
Gender category and Under 19 Years	9369.40	1	9369.40	17.99*
Age groups and Boys	641529.78	2	320764.89	615.99*
Age groups and Girls	315748.16	2	157874.08	303.18*
Error	934194.96	198	4718.16	

\* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence. (Table values required for significance at .05 level with df 1 and 1794 & 2 and 1794 are 3.84 and 2.99 respectively.)

**TABLE IV**  
**THE SCHEFFE'S TEST FOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PAIRED MEANS OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS OF BOYS**

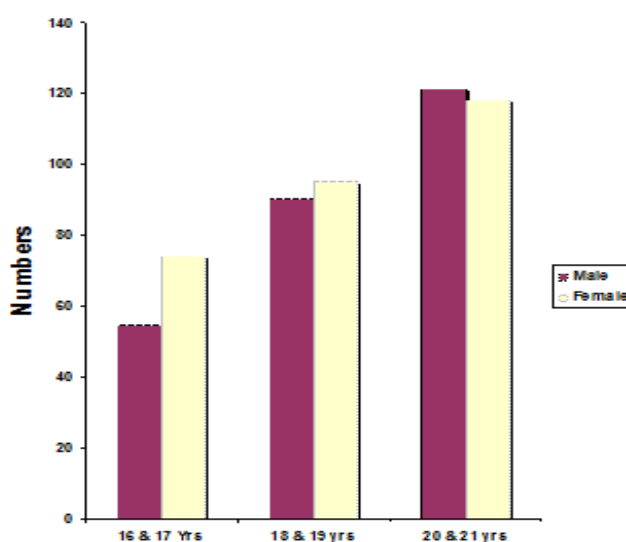
Means			Mean Difference	Confidence Intervals
Under 14 Years	Under 17 Years	Under 19 Years		
55.01	90.45		35.44*	4.56
55.01		121.22	66.21*	4.56
	90.45	121.22	30.77*	4.56

\* Significant at.05 Level

**TABLE V**  
**THE SCHEFFE'S TEST FOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PAIRED MEANS OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS OF GIRLS**

Means			Mean Difference	Confidence Intervals
Under 14 Years	Under 17 Years	Under 19 Years		
74.12	95.42		21.30*	4.56
74.12		118.41	44.29*	4.56
	95.42	118.41	22.99*	4.56

\* Significant at.05 Level



**FIGURE 1: MEAN SCORES OF BOYS AND GIRLS IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.**

### Discussion on Findings

The result of the study shows that there was a significant difference exists among the three different age groups and between the boys and girls on attitude towards physical activity.

It was found that Under 19 Years boys groups were better in attitude towards physical activity when compared to the other two age groups such as under 17 and Under 14 Years. In girls, Under 19 Years of age group showed better performance in attitude towards physical activity when compared to Under 17 Years and Under 14 Years.

Researchers indicated that children who have more positive attitudes toward physical activity are reported to be more likely to participate in physical activity outside of school (Chung and Phillips, 2002; Ding et al., 2006; McKenzie, 2003; Portman, 2003) and demonstrate higher physical activity levels (Hagger et al., 1997) than those with less positive attitudes.

According to a review of literature on children's Attitudes toward Physical Education/Activity by Solmon (2003), children's characteristics and contextual factors are two major factors that are related to children's attitudes. Children's characteristics refer to children's age, gender and sports skill. Contextual factors include the quality of physical education programs and the accessibility of after school physical activities.

With regard to children's characteristics, elementary children are found to have more positive attitudes than secondary school children (Lee, 2004; Martin, 2000; Solmon and Carter, 1995; Xiang et al., 2004) and children's attitudes become less positive as they progress through their schooling (Biddle and Mutrie, 2008; Lee, 2004; Prochaska et al., 2003; Xianget al., 2004).

Lee (2004) found that the younger children possess more positive attitudes toward physical activity and show more interests toward all kinds of physical activities. However, the reliability of younger children responding to questions might need to be carefully considered due to their lower self-evaluation ability (Lee, 2004).

Patterson and Faucette, (1990) pointed that successful athletes have higher levels of motivations to succeed and lower levels of motivations to avoid failure and success oriented athletes performed better than failure oriented athletes in international competitions.

It is inferred from the literatures and from the result of the study that now a day's children express very favorable attitudes toward health, fitness, enjoyment and social interaction benefits of physical activity, but do not enjoy physical activities involving hard practice and risk-taking movements. So it may be considered properly during the childhood days.

### Conclusions

1. The results of the study showed that there was a significant difference exists among the three different age groups and between the boys and girls on attitude towards physical activity.

3. It was found that Under 19 Years boys groups were better in attitude towards physical activity when compared to the other two age groups such as under 17 and under 14 Years.

4. In girls, Under 19 Years of age group showed better performance in attitude towards physical activity when compared to Under 17 Years and Under 14 Years.

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