

## Attitudes toward Physical Activities in Faculty Members and Employees of State University

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe attitudes toward physical activities in faculty members and employees of State University. The study approach was descriptive-exploratory method. The population of the study consisted of all faculty members and employees with the state universities in the fourth regional district of Iran including the universities of Gonbad Kavous, Damghan, Mazandaran, Agricultural and Natural Resources of Sari, Golestan, Semnan, Agricultural and Natural Resources of Gorgan as well as Shahrood Industrial and Babol Industrial Noshirvani schools (N=2262). A number of 329 people were selected as the participants using Cochran's formula. Kenyon's ATPA scale was used to collect the data. This scale has been widely used in various studies across the world. In the present study, a short form of the questionnaire with 28 items under six subscales, modified by Attarzadeh (2005), was used to collect the data. The content validity of the questionnaire was approved by some university professors. The reliability of the scale was calculated using Cronbach alpha formula, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.92. Both descriptive statistics including measures of central tendency and inferential statistics including Chi-square were run to analyze the data. Result show, there is no significant difference in attitudes toward physical activities between men and women (P=0.127). There is no significant difference in attitudes toward physical activities between faculty members and employees (P=0.102). But on the subscales, physical activity as social experience (P=0.002), physical activity as an aesthetic experience (P=0.001) and physical activity as catharsis (P=0.027) a significant difference was found between faculty members and employees.

**KEYWORDS:** Attitudes, Physical Activities, Faculty Members, Employees, State University.

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### 1.INTRODUCTION

Physical activity is an inherent aspect of human nature, which is considered as a means for growth, development, well-being and happiness. Human life begins with movement and develops through activity and motion. Activity was the basis of life in early human beings so that those with higher physical strength succeeded in the struggle for survival. However, contemporary machine life, increased facilities and welfare have diverted human into a route inconsistent with his nature so that he experiences a variety of diseases caused by low activity, immobility and poverty of movement. Thus, World Health Organization (WHO) has suggested that education systems should develop criterions for health education, which brings about marked changes in people's knowledge of their health consistent with their abilities and competences. In this fundamental change, individuals may acquire a conscious understanding and promote their knowledge of environment [1].

Attitude may be defined based on the theories of learning and cognitive approaches. Every theory defines the concept of attitude differently and addresses a particular aspect of attitude. Allport (1935) defines attitude as "a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon an individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related"[2]. This definition, which is essentially based on the learning theory, addresses the effect of past experiences on forming attitudes and reactions to a certain condition – as it is discussed in the behavioral approach [3]. On the other hand, Krech and Crutchfield (1948), who were proponents of cognitive approach, defined attitude as, "a consistent system of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes in relation to some aspects of individual life" [4]. In this definition, the source of attitude is not addressed while the subjective experience of the present is emphasized. Contemporary definitions of attitude consider a combination of elements in either perspective. Attitudes held towards an object, opinion, individual, group and/or situation are considered as the orientations consistent with cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements. The cognitive aspect of attitude involves all thoughts, beliefs and knowledge an individual holds about the object of attitude. The emotional aspect (value) includes all emotions, particularly an individual's positive or negative valuation of the object of attitude. The behavioral aspect of the attitude involves the individual's readiness to respond and tend to do something about the object of attitude. Thus, attitude is related to our past learning and experience on the one hand and our current subjective takes of the object of attitude so that it stimulates our either positive or negative reaction to things, situations, organizations, concepts and individuals [4]. One of the important enquiry fields of

sports psychology is the study of attitudes. The deep study and understanding of attitudes contributes to PE development programs and talent search [5-6].

Over the last years, a tendency has grown towards attitude measurement in the field of sports activities. Accordingly, Kenyon developed the first scale of attitude measurement in the field of sports and physical activities in late 1960s [7]. The scale was called Attitude toward Physical Activity (ATPA). This scale includes a number of six subscales: social experience, health and fitness, vertigo, aesthetic, catharsis and ascetic. Following the development of this scale, a variety of other scales were also developed and introduced for different social groups [1-8].

In this regard, several studies have been carried out so far. Patterson (1990), Cavanaugh (1995) used the student version of ATPA to investigate both male and female students' attitudes towards physical exercise [9-10]. Thurstone (1994) and Mood (1994) investigated the students' motivation for participation in sports activities using ATPA questionnaire [11-12]. Despite the plentitude of attitude measurement studies on different cultures and people and as it is generally held that physical exercise is the source of conscious behavior to achieve well-being exerting marked effects on temperament, productive power, efficiency, reduced depression and increased job satisfaction in employees, a review of studies conducted in Iran shows that only one comprehensive national study on PE attitude measurement has yet been conducted by Mozzafari (2002) [13-14]. Then, Attarzadeh (2005) and Mohammadi (2011) described people's attitudes towards physical activities in Mashhad and Kurdistan provinces, respectively [1-15]. However, no study has yet been done to measure the attitudes of university employees and faculty members towards physical exercise in order to help offer practical approaches to promote their attitudes towards sports activities. Their poor attendances at sports activities may account for this deficiency despite the fact that officials have been trying to improve both the quality and quantity of sports facilities and equipment.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to investigate and describe the attitudes of faculty members and employees with the state universities in the fourth regional district of Iran towards physical activities, the study adopted a descriptive-exploratory method with a field study approach. The population of the study consisted of all faculty members and employees with the state universities in the fourth regional district of Iran including the universities of Gonbad Kavous, Damghan, Mazandaran, Agricultural and Natural Resources of Sari, Golestan, Semnan, Agricultural and Natural Resources of Gorgan as well as Shahrood Industrial and Babol Industrial Noshirvani schools (N=2262). A number of 329 people were selected as the participants using Cochran's formula.

Kenyon's ATPA scale was used to collect the data. This scale has been widely used in various studies across the world. In the present study, a short form of the questionnaire with 28 items under six subscales, modified by Attarzadeh (2005), was used to collect the data. The content validity of the questionnaire was approved by some university professors. The reliability of the scale was calculated using Cronbach alpha formula, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.92. Both descriptive statistics including measures of central tendency and inferential statistics including Chi-square were run to analyze the data.

## 3. RESULTS

As shown in Table 1, men and women constituted 76.01 and 23.99 percent of the participants, respectively. Besides, faculty members and employees constituted 55.1 and 44.9 percent of the participants, respectively.

**Table 1. Participants' frequency and percentage according to job and gender**

Job	Gender	Faculty		Employees		Total	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
	Men	138	84.66	87	65.41	225	76.01
	Women	25	15.34	46	34.59	71	23.99
	Total	163	100	133	100	296	100

Table 2 illustrates the participants' attitudes towards the six subscales of attitudinal terms including physical activity as social experience, physical activity to improve health and fitness, physical activity to experience vertigo, physical activity as an aesthetic experience, physical activity as catharsis and physical activity as ascetic experience.

**Table 2. Percentage of attitudinal terms**

Variables related to attitude statements	The subjects' attitudes				
	Totally Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Completely Disagree
physical activity as social experience	32.98	50.68	13.48	2.21	0.63
physical activity to improve health and fitness	45.58	43.18	6.64	1.05	0.52
physical activity to experience vertigo	22.17	40.86	20.69	14.11	2.15
physical activity as an aesthetic experience	14.17	55.08	23.52	6.41	0.80
physical activity as catharsis	21.81	58.39	15.10	3.71	0.97
physical activity as ascetic experience	4.45	15.34	8.46	52.20	19.7

**Table 3. Mean ranks of attitudinal components with regard to participants' gender and job**

Variables	Social	Health	Vertigo	Aesthetic	Catharsis	Ascetic	Total attitude	
Job	Men	139.44	137.26	138.94	135.50	133.33	138.81	119.28
	Women	144.14	151.42	121.27	155.74	153.41	155.45	135.85
Gender	Faculty	129.58	136.21	145.56	128.08	131.46	151.09	119.16
	Employees	159.97	152.50	128.80	160.78	152.91	138.80	134.22

**Table 4. Comparison of men and women attitudes**

	Social	Health	Vertigo	Aesthetic	Catharsis	Ascetic	Total attitude
$\chi^2$	0.168	1.522	2.444	3.247	3.176	2.063	2.333
df	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
p	0.682	0.217	0.118	0.072	0.075	0.151	0.127

As shown in Table 3 and Table 4, there is no significant difference in attitudes toward physical activities between men and women (P=0.127).

**Table 5. Comparison of the attitudes between faculty members and employees**

	Social	Health	Vertigo	Aesthetic	Catharsis	Ascetic	Total attitude
$\chi^2$	9.778	2.770	3.070	11.930	4.906	1.582	2.680
df	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
p	0.002	0.096	0.080	0.001	0.027	0.208	0.102

As shown in Table 3 and Table 5, there is no significant difference in attitudes toward physical activities between faculty members and employees (P=0.102). On the first subscale, physical activity as social experience, a significant difference was found in attitudes toward physical activity between faculty members and employees (P=0.002) with faculty members obtaining higher scores.

On the fourth subscale, physical activity as an aesthetic experience, a significant difference was found in attitudes toward physical activity between faculty members and employees (P=0.001) with employees obtaining higher scores.

On the fifth subscale, physical activity as catharsis, a significant difference was found in attitudes toward physical activity between faculty members and employees (P=0.027) with employees obtaining higher scores.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to investigate the attitudes of faculty members and employees with the state universities in the fourth regional district of Iran toward physical activity. The results showed that faculty members and employees constituted 55.1 and 44.9 percent of participants, respectively. From among the faculty members, 84.66 percent were male and 12.26 percent were female. From among the employees, 65.41 percent were male and 33.83 percent were female.

The present findings showed that the main reasons for faculty members and employees' participation in physical activities included achieving happiness and pleasure, preventing diseases and physical and mental improvement. Ramezani (1996) reported the main reasons for participation in sports-for-all programs to include respectively obtaining pleasure and happiness, preventing diseases, enjoying social emotions, fulfillment of the need to belong to a group as well as the refreshing and safe qualities of sports-for-all [16]. Vaezmousavi (1996) reported that IRGC members participated in sports activities mainly to maintain their health [5]. Godarzi (2000) contended that the main reasons why faculty members with Tehran University participated in sports activities included respectively maintenance of health and well-being, removal of nervous pressures, increased efficiency, fitness, pleasure and socialization [17]. Zarei (2001) reported that the main reasons for students at medical universities to participate in physical leisure activities included taking pleasure, maintenance of health and strength and fitness[18]. Mousavi (2001) investigated the effect of sports on nervous pressure, mental and physical health in faculty members and employees at Islamic Azad universities in the third regional district of Iran and reported that mental health was a stronger predictor of sports participation [19]. Moreover, Mozzafari (2002) investigated the leisure time activities in students at Islamic Azad universities and reported obtaining pleasure, maintaining health, feeling strong and achieving physical fitness as the main motivations for participation in sports activities [14]. According to Attarzadeh (2005), men mostly tended to participate in physical exercises to obtain happiness, improve body and mind and prevent diseases while women did so to lose weight, obtain happiness and improve body and mind, respectively [1]. Peter (1993) studied the attitudes of American people towards participation in sports activities and reported maintenance of health as the most important reason why inactive people wished to participate in physical exercises [13]. Kamarudin (2007) reported that the main motivation of male and female students to participate in sports activities included taking pleasure in sports and reduction of stress. Female students believed that sports training improved their mental-psychological health while male

students held that sports increased their strength. Research suggests that taking pleasure and happiness is one of the main motivations for sports participation [20].

The results showed no significant difference in the attitudes toward physical exercise between faculty members and employees with the state universities in the fourth regional district of Iran. Thus, there was no significant difference in the attitudes toward physical exercise (dimensions: physical activity as social experience, physical activity to improve health and fitness, physical activity to experience vertigo, physical activity as an aesthetic experience, physical activity as catharsis and physical activity as ascetic experience) between faculty members and employees with the state universities.

The results showed no significant difference in the attitudes toward physical activity between men and women. This is consistent with the findings of Cavanaugh (1995), Mozzafari (2002) and Attarzadeh (2005) but inconsistent with the findings of Mood (1994) [10-14-1-12]. A comparison of attitudinal mean ranks showed that men obtained higher ranks in physical activities associated with thrill and vertigo while women obtained higher ranks in the subscales of health and fitness, aesthetic experience, social experience, catharsis and ascetic experience. This is inconsistent with the findings of Mood (1994) but consistent with the findings of Arm (1990) and Mozzafari (2002) [12-21-14]. There was no significant difference in the attitudes toward the two subscales of vertigo and catharsis between men and women. This is consistent with the findings of Mozzafari (1381) [14]. There was no significant difference in the attitudes toward physical activity as ascetic experience between men and women. This is inconsistent with the findings of Mozzafari (1381) and Arm (1990) [14-21]. No significant difference was found in the attitudes toward physical activities between faculty members and employees. However, there was a significant difference in attitudes toward physical activities among people with different jobs. The difference was observed in the subscales of social experience, aesthetic experience and catharsis. This is consistent with the findings of Mozzafari (2002) and Attarzadeh (2005) [14-1].

There was no significant relationship between participants' job and inclination towards physical activities. However, employees showed a stronger tendency towards physical activities. Attarzadeh (2005) reported that school students, university students, doctors and academics showed higher tendency to do physical activities [1]. Dastgheib (1999) reported that only 24 percent of female athletes were employed and the employed were less eager than the unemployed to participate in physical exercises [22]. However, Niknejad (1999) conducted a study entitled *The Role of Sports: Different Social Groups of Women* and reported that most of the participants in physical exercises were employees and students [23].

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