

Administrators' Attitude towards the Implementation of Physical Education in Selangor Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Despite considerable investments in transforming the physical education (PE) curriculum and improving PE quality in primary schools, reports indicate that quality implementation is mostly impeded by systemic barriers, especially at the administrative level. It is suggested that the vision of propelling quality PE is in the hands of administrators, especially principals. However, this role has been previously overlooked. This study explores the principals' attitude towards PE implementation, specifically by examining four implementation domains: a) supervision and monitoring (S&M); b) professional development (PD); c) support & allocation (S&A); and d) resource and curriculum (R&C). Seven personal variables (e.g., gender, years of teaching experience, working experience as a principal, type of school, academic qualification, professional qualification, physical activity level) were used to compare attitudes among groups across implementation domains. The ratio of 3:1:1 stratified random sampling was carried out to determine the sample size of 250 schools out of a total of 372 schools from five randomly selected districts in Selangor. Descriptive statistics showed that administrators generally had a low positive attitude towards the implementation of PE (mean= 3.88, SD= .604) but still being in a favourable range. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that the attitude in carrying out PE implementation was significantly different ($p < .05$) among personal variable groups: a) type of schools; b) academic qualification; c) professional qualification; and d) physical level

activity. The school leaders' attitude towards PE implementation may be dependent on the investigated variables which influence the development and sustainability of quality PE programme.

Keywords: Attitude, implementation, leadership, principals, physical education

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INTRODUCTION

The benefits of physical activity have always been scientifically proven to alleviate human physiological, psychological, and social health. Regular physical activity is known to be the key prevention from various heart diseases and sicknesses, ultimately improving one's well-being (World Health Organisation, 2010). A recent article from The Star newspaper by Chung (2020) reported that more than half of the adult population in Malaysia is either obese or overweight. The Malaysian Health Minister has declared that one of the leading causes of this problem is low health literacy (35% of the adult population). This raises the question of where our nation's physical education (PE) and Health Education is lacking (Chung, 2020).

In 2011, the Ministry of Education (MOE) stepped up the efforts to enhance the education curriculum by introducing a new curriculum. The new curriculum gives school leaders and teachers greater flexibility in learning and teaching, empowering them to better cater to the needs of the students (KPM, 2017). In addition to the new PE curriculum, MOE has launched '1 Murid 1 Sukan' (1M1S) policy in 2011 to enhance physical activeness and promote sporting activities among children, be it in sports or recreational activities. It is seen as a complementary policy that functions concurrently with the PE curriculum. The foundation of carrying out 1M1S is the implementation of quality PE and Health subjects in schools (Bahagian Sukan, 2011). PE has been recognised by the UNESCO

Charter as a basic human right since 1978. Yet today, PE still struggles to be valued and recognised in various regions across the world. Malaysia is amongst the nations where PE has been largely neglected or marginalised by schools. Several prominent and recent studies by Aboshkair et al. (2012), Mohamed et al. (2017), Ali et al. (2014) and Wee (2019) indicate that PE in Malaysia is in a dire situation as a number of teachers find it challenging to deliver quality PE. This is because school administrators have not been demonstrating quality PE implementation.

The current issues on PE instructional programmes in Malaysia indicate numerous setbacks in the implementation, teaching and learning of PE in Malaysia. Extensive research has been carried out on teachers' perspective towards PE implementation, which revealed the patterns of problems exhibited at administrative levels. According to research reviews that have been reported by Wee (2013), there are three main challenges in conducting quality PE. These are teacher-related, student-related, and administrative-related challenges in Malaysian education settings. It is confirmed by Mohamed et al. (2019) that indeed administrative-related challenges pose the biggest obstacle in the delivery of a quality PE programme, with issues such as Supervision/Monitoring of PE teaching, expendable PE classes, staff training programme, lack of facilities and equipment. A more recent study which was carried out in Malaysian primary schools by Wee (2019) shows little to no supervision or monitoring

of PE teaching, no observation plan was carried out and lessons were not prepared by teachers. In 2011, The Star newspaper also reported similar outcomes that quality PE programmes were facing. Wee's (2017) study appeared to corroborate the ideas of Aboshkair et al. (2012), who reported that there was indeed limited support from school leadership. Furthermore, although PE is a compulsory subject, Malaysian PE classes are frequently replaced to teach 'more important' subjects particularly during examination week (Aboshkair et al., 2012). The findings by Aboshkair et al. (2012) appeared to be consistent with Ali's et al. (2014) study, which showed that 81% of teachers perceived there were inappropriate class combinations during the teaching of PE. Their findings suggest that PE classes are indeed often used for other subjects whenever exams are approaching. Apart from that, Ali et al. (2014) found an obvious lack of facilities for teachers to carry out effective classes, and it was also reported that 81% of teachers perceived that there was an improper use of the PE budget at the administrative level. For these reasons, PE has been side-lined in various aspects, from being expendable to a failure to secure more resources and equipment as well as incompetent methods of teaching PE. Clearly, priority and attention in educational support and evaluation tend to be given to 'more important' subjects, i.e. Literacy, Science, and Mathematics, whereas PE is marginalised by not having a proper evaluation or management support from the administration (Hardman & Green, 2011).

For decades, leadership has always been seen as a vital factor in organisational effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 1999). In educational settings, although the context of school leadership has been rapidly changing, administrators, specifically the principals, still play a decisive role in influencing teachers' motivation, leading and managing the development of the school, devising school policies and delivering curriculum to meet its educational goals cohesively (e.g., Pont et al., 2008). More specifically, the head of school and its lieutenants have a strong influence on the school culture, subsequently impacting the teaching and learning of both teachers and students (Turan et al., 2014). As such, to combat issues of marginalisation, social isolation, and ineffective teaching practices of PE programmes, an effective school leadership is needed at the administrative level. Quality schooling is increasingly dependent on leadership, particularly the effectiveness of the educational leadership of the principal (Hallinger & Heck, 1999). Burkhauser's (2017) study discovered that teachers' perception of the school environment depends on the type of leadership skills principals demonstrated. This is because they are ultimately the key movers in the improvement of efficiency and equity of schooling (Pont et al., 2008). These studies collectively support Rainer's et al. (2012) study that, despite the various challenges in nurturing an environment for quality PE implementation, principals who are committed to supporting PE would ensure better strategic planning and more effective

use of resources to assist their teachers in implementing PE policies.

The classic, effective leadership is instructional leadership, once a favourite in many schools globally. It primarily emphasises on ensuring the pedagogical goals of the school are met by using a leader’s authority in contributing towards teachers and students’ achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1999). Burns (1978) developed the transformational leadership concept which emphasised on developing others to support one another, raise one’s morality and motivation to a higher level as well as support the organisation as a whole. A combination of instructional and transformational leadership is the basis of the study’s conceptual framework. In successful schools, school leaders are able to combine ‘collaborative capacity building with a keen pedagogical focus’ (Day & Sammons, 2016). They are able to carry out leadership that is both transformational and instructional/pedagogical in its focus.

With theories of leadership and attitude, the hypothesised conceptual framework of this study is based on the interaction of experience, attitude and leadership as presented in Figure 1.

Taken collectively, there have been no reliable studies that examine the principals’ attitude in PE implementation, which leads to a scarcity of information about school principals’ insights and outlook towards PE implementation in schools. This current study, therefore attempted to examine the attitude of administrators towards the quality implementation of PE programmes, specifically the actions or behaviour they exhibit in the implementation within their schools. A quantitative approach was adopted in an attempt to examine principals’ attitude towards PE implementation domains: *a) supervision and monitoring; b) professional development; c) support & allocation; and d) resource and curriculum.* In addition to the aforementioned items, seven personal variables (e.g., *gender, years*

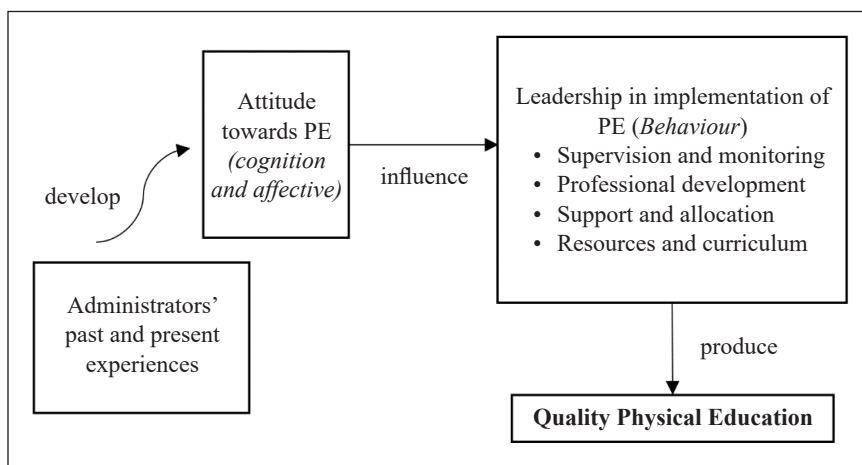


Figure 1. Research framework of attitude, leadership and quality PE

of teaching experience, working experience as a principal, type of schools, academic qualification, professional qualification, physical activity level) were used to compare attitude among groups across each variable towards PE implementation as well as towards each implementation domain.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership Models & Effective School Leaders

The principal is the head of the organisation, playing the role of a leader, designer, implementer of change, and curriculum innovation. Besides, his/her role is to determine elective subjects, to design and manage teaching and learning programmes, to ensure adequate teaching and learning resources, and to be a role model in raising the level of professionalism (Nazir, 2019). Such important roles require a better understanding of how to lead a school effectively. A principal ought to understand their style of leading in order to better leverage on their existing strengths (Peterson, 1999).

There are two types of leadership that are commonly practised in educational settings: Instructional and Transformational leadership. Instructional leadership is well known as a key traditional leadership model and is the most frequently used model in schools. These leaders are largely interested in enhancing instruction, tracking pupils' behaviours in or outside the classroom, assessing students' achievement scores, optimising teacher performance,

promoting professional growth, and closely supervising academic development progression (Hallinger & Heck, 1999). As for transformational leaders, they put their trust in their followers and allow them personal space for professional growth (Leithwood, 1994). Principals who embrace this leadership style will be setting an example to inspire employees to place their organisations' needs above their own self-interest. Innovative and creative initiatives are highly appreciated and encouraged among members of the schools as their leaders are risk-takers. According to Leithwood (1994), a collective vision can only be achieved when leaders do not fear experimenting with unconventional methods.

The existence of many types of leadership perhaps carries one agenda: to be an effective school leader and manager. School leadership involves a very complex role as leaders must equip themselves with the relevant knowledge and skills to overcome various challenges in order to produce quality education and effective schooling (Hallinger & Huber, 2012). To ensure high performing and quality leaders are placed in every school, the Malaysian School Leadership Competency Standard or known as Standard Kompetensi Kepengetuaan Sekolah Malaysia (SKKSM) was formulated and it sets the minimum competencies for school principals. With such stated competencies, it is the principal's responsibility to ensure quality PE is achieved as encapsulated by UNESCO (2015).

PE issues (Turner et al., 2017) have been persistently on-going for many years. Rainer et al. (2012) concluded that administrators were the main stakeholders in effecting change at the school level. While their study suggested that headteachers experience a number of challenges in attempts to create a high-quality PE environment such as policy development, overseeing managerial work, public relations, quality assurance, and the curriculum; they opined that the head of school must be responsible in providing the leadership and support necessary to nurture an environment that allowed for quality PE delivery.

Even though school leaders are aware of the importance of PE, findings show that school policies and an educational environment do not necessarily reflect this awareness. Zeng and Meng (2014) stated that while a majority of principals did have positive attitudes toward PE, unfortunately, principals from poorer schools in rural areas appeared to see no value in PE. Again, to achieve quality PE, the responsibility lies with the administrators at the school level as the design and implementation of the DSKP curriculum and plans can only work with the effective involvement of school administration (Jemaah Nazir, 2019); specifically, by implementing UNESCO's (2015) national strategy for quality PE based on five pillars:

- Teacher education, supply, and development
- Facilities, equipment, and resources
- Curriculum flexibility
- Community partnerships
- Monitoring and quality assurance

Quality Physical Education (QPE)

PE is known as a process of learning that uses the knowledge of health, fitness, and skills education to develop the whole person, mind, and body. Hence, children's lives should involve both physical activities and PE as they are important (Shimon, 2019). Similarly, McKenzie (2001) stated that PE functions as the most critical role in the promotion of health and activity. According to Vilhjalmsson and Thorlindsson (1998), it is strongly accepted that PE has a role to play when it comes to influencing physical activities in leisure time, as PE encourages positive activity interactions as well as education. In that case, it is critical to look into how PE plays an effective role in encouraging active lifestyles and providing all students with the opportunity to participate in satisfactory levels of physical activity (Cardon & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2002). UNESCO (2015) defines the term Quality Physical Education (QPE) as:

“The planned, progressive, inclusive learning experience that forms part of the curriculum in early years, primary and secondary education. In this respect, QPE acts as the foundation for lifelong engagement in physical activity and sport.”(p.9)

PE in Malaysia had been made mandatory as stated in 1979's circular letter, (Ministry of Education, 1979) which aimed to enhance the development of PE curriculum. In line with the National Education Philosophy, the role of PE is to form positive psychological, social, and cognitive growth development. This

strongly supports the importance of PE in nurturing the “whole child” where currently, the subject is mandatory in all public schools. The current PE curriculum (KSSR PJKK) was formulated based on the National Education Philosophy aimed at producing a balanced, physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and social generation in line with the National Sports Policy (KPM, 2017) as well as many other international well-known bodies and organisations. The main objective of the Malaysian PE curriculum aims to develop students who are knowledgeable, skilled, and possess positive values and attitudes in maintaining physical fitness and to produce students with 21st-century skills (KPM, 2017).

Concept of Attitude and Decision Making

The study of attitudes has a long and rich history in social psychology (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). As coined by Allport (1935), attitude is “*a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related.*” It explains that if someone has a positive or negative experience with an object, the way they will respond and behave towards that object in the future will be affected. The list of the essential characteristics of attitude provided by Allport (1935):

- preparation or readiness for favourable or unfavourable responses
- attitude is organised through experience

- attitude is activated in the presence of all objects or situations with which the attitude is related

In short, an attitude involves three components (Morris, 1976): feeling, thought or belief and an action. In this connection, Sherif and Sherif (1969) pointed that an attitude is a “*...set of categories for evaluating a domain of social stimuli ...*”. What is meant is that attitude is a continual of whole judgement, which he establishes as he learns about the objects, values or ideas. In return, he relates himself to the domain with various degrees of either positive or negative effects.

In a study by Juliusson et al. (2005), she stated that past decisions directly impact the decisions people make later in the future. Luke and Sinclair (1991) revealed that the major factors affecting both positive and negative attitudes toward PE among male and female adults were the K-10 PE experiences that they went through. Most importantly, the determinants of such experiences and attitudes towards PE in their grown-up life are due to curriculum content, teacher behaviour, class atmosphere, student self-perceptions, and facilities.

Attitude and PE Leadership Effectiveness

With frequent reports on how teachers and school leaders mishandle the PE subject, it is not surprising to deduce that they have little interest in the subject itself. Evidently, such situations were identified to be related to the administration's leadership attitude

in PE decision-making. For instance, administrators in suburban and rural schools seem to lack leadership qualities, and PE is planned without a goal in mind, especially as the subject is deemed unimportant (Rami et al., 2020). Due to this attitude, it is usually marginalised by the administrators in various forms, e.g., lack of consideration in assigning teachers to teach PE, non-major PE teachers teach the subject and make little effort in organising school sports or PE programmes in Malaysia (Wee, 2017). Coincidentally, several studies conducted in China on the attitude and belief of the principals found that principals from the “Poor/Developing-region” school system believe PE is less important than other courses (Zeng & Meng, 2014). It is the responsibility and duty of principals to run the whole curriculum (Rainer et al., 2012) as stated in the Education Act 1996.

Attitude and Gender towards PE

Whilst experiences may be the main source of determining one’s attitude, there is another element we should look at - gender. Boutilier and San Giovanni (1983) summarised that “the traditional polarisation of sex roles has produced in our society two different kinds of human beings - women and men - who are expected to play different roles, hold different attitudes, espouse different values, and express different feelings”. Not surprisingly, children possess a definite attitude towards PE and physical activity the moment they enrol in secondary school. Males and females demonstrated differing attitudes towards PE according to some

studies (Bogale et al., 2018) yet some studies revealed no differences between males and females.

METHODS

Sample

There are 622 primary schools in all Selangor districts (Ministry of Education, 2020). Five districts in Selangor were selected in the random sampling procedure out of the 10 Selangor districts proportion. Then, stratified random sampling was carried out to determine the sample size of 250 participants out of a total of 372 schools (from the 5 districts). Since there are three types of schools, the national school (SK) and national-typed schools (SKJC & SJKT), the ratio of 3:1:1 stratified random sampling was used to reduce sampling error and ensure a more equal representative from different types of schools. This is because national school (SK) has a larger number than national-types schools (SKJC & SJKT) in Malaysia.

Measuring Instrument

The Likert scale instrument that was used in this study to measure leadership attitude and implementation practices towards PE, was developed by Rhine (2011). It was adapted and modified. The survey had a mixture of open-ended questions and scale questions. The survey had two parts:

Part 1: Independent socio-demographic variable data (which are represented by gender, years of teaching experiences, years as a principal, types of school, academic

qualification, professional qualification, and physical activity activeness were used to measure the attitude level between selected attributes.

Part 2: Four domains of QPE implementation in evaluating principals' attitude: - Supervision & Monitoring, Professional Development, Support & Allocation, Resource & Curriculum. Each domain had several statements for respondents to state their extent of agreement: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree" or "strongly agree". The items were formed base on the leadership theories. With multiple items on the same broad object, these codes could be summed or averaged to give an indication of each respondent's overall positive or negative orientation towards that object. The scales had a summated mean range of 1.00 (high level of negative attitude) to 5.00 (high level of positive attitude). A mean of 3.00 is considered neutral; a mean above 3.00 is considered a favourable attitude towards PE implementation, whereas a mean below 3.00 is considered as unfavourable attitude (Johns, 2010). The internal consistency reliability of items was applied after the pilot study and had a Cronbach alpha of $\geq .73$.

Data Collection Procedure

The MOE and Selangor State Education granted permission to conduct the survey in schools. A mixed-mode survey design was utilised and the strategy of "*multiple contact modes and response data collected by a single response mode*" (Dillman et al.,

2014) was applied. The survey was created through Google Form, an online survey administration tool offered by Google according to the procedure recommended by Dillman et al. (2014). The consent letter and link to the survey were then emailed to potential participants. A postal mail with similar introduction was sent to the schools as the third reminder for those who had not responded to the online survey.

Data Analysis

Descriptive parameters (frequencies, mean, and standard deviation) were calculated based on the four implementation domains. The basic independent variables include the gender, years of teaching experience, working experience as a principal, types of schools, academic qualification, professional qualification and physical activity level. The dependent variables include attitude towards the implementation of a quality PE programme.

One-Way ANOVA test with the level of significance $p=0.05$ was used to compare means of overall attitude in each implementation domain, means of overall attitude across the groups within the demographic variables and means of attitude in each domain across the groups within the demographic variables. It was used to compare means of each domain (research question) across the groups (i.e., SK, SJKC, and SJKT administrators). Independent T-test with the level of significance $p=0.05$ was used to compare groups between males and females in PE implementation attitude. The magnitude of the difference between the variables (effect size) was calculated too.

RESULT

Descriptive statistics were used, and the average distribution was M= 3.88 (Table 1), indicating that administrators “sometimes” to “often” have a positive attitude towards PE. The total mean attitude suggested that the overall administrators’ attitude towards QPE implementation was positive oriented. Nevertheless, the orientation of the positive attitude was deemed low as the range of mean scores were in the middle of the Likert-scale spectrum. Attitude towards professional development (PD) domain had the highest mean score = 4.04 (SD = .577) while S & M, S & A and R & C domains

obtained mean scores of 3.69 (SD = .612), 3.92 (SD = .575) and 3.86 (SD = .608) respectively.

Tables 2, 3 and 4 show the comparison in sub-scale of each implementation domain. One-way ANOVA results in Table 2 revealed that overall attitude towards QPE implementation showed a statistically significant difference between four domains of quality PE implementation [F (3, 324) = 4.737, p = .003]. In addition, principals’ overall attitude towards PE implementation based on personal variables (Table 3) revealed a statistically significant difference between different types of school groups F

Table 1
Mean attitude scores for participants in four implementation domains and their overall attitude score

Domains	No. of statements	Mean	SD	Mean interpretation of attitude
1. Supervision & monitoring	3	3.69	.612	Low positive
2. Professional Development	3	4.04	.577	High positive
3. Support & Allocation	5	3.92	.575	Low positive
4. Resource & curriculum	2	3.86	.608	Low positive
Total Attitude	328	3.88	.604	Low positive

Table 2
One-Way ANOVA in overall attitude towards PE implementation

Measure	df	F	Sig.	Post Hoc Tukey HSD
Implementation of PE	3, 324	4.737	.003	S & M and PD (.002)*

Note. *P value mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3
One-Way ANOVA in overall attitude towards PE implementation based on personal variables

Measures	F	η ²	Post Hoc Tukey HSD
1. Types of schools	3.659 (.030*)	.085	SK & SJKC (.023)*
2. Academic qualification	3.440 (.012*)	.152	Ph.D & Other (.032)*
3. Professional qualification	3.155 (.029*)	.108	Cert. in Edu. & Degree in Edu. (.022)*
4. Physical activity level	4.080 (.010*)	.136	Sedentary & Active (.017)*

Note. *P value mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4
One-Way ANOVA in attitude towards each implementation domain based on personal variables

Measure	Supervision & Monitoring		Professional Development		Support & Allocation		Resource & Curriculum	
	F	Post Hoc Tukey HSD	F	Post Hoc Tukey HSD	F	Post Hoc Tukey HSD	F	Post Hoc Tukey HSD
1. Years of teaching experiences	8.495 (.000)*	10-13 years & 14-17 years (.016)* & 10-13 years & 18-21 years (.000)*	-	-	-	-	-	-
	9.693 (.000)*	SK & SJKC (.000)* & SJKC & SJKT (.021)*	3.515 (.034)*	SK & SJKC (.046)*	-	-	-	-
3. Academic qualification	-	-	3.023 (.023)*	Degree & Others (.050)*	3.388 (.013)*	Degree & Others (.010)*	3.310 (.015)*	Master & Ph.D (.013)* & Ph.D & others (.043)*
4. Professional Qualification	-	-	4.374 (.007*)	Cert. & Degree (.003)*	3.717 (.015)*	Cert. & Degree (.063)**	-	-
5. Physical activity level	2.842 (.024)*	Active & Low active (.088)**	-	-	3.177 (.029)*	Sedentary & Active (.016)*	2.842 (.043)*	Sedentary & Active (.065)**

Note. *P value mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. ** Post Hoc P value >.05 is interpreted with caution.

(2,79) = 3.659, $p = .030$; different academic qualifications $F(4,77) = 3.440$, $p = .012$. ; professional qualification levels $F(3,78) = 3.155$, $p < .029$; and physical activity levels $F(3,78) = 4.080$, $p < .010$.

In Table 4, the differences of attitude in each PE implementation domain (S&M, PD, S&A, R&C) based on demographics showed a statistically significant between the five personal variable groups: i) *years of teaching experience*; ii) *types of school*; iii) *academic qualification*; iv) *professional qualification*; and v) *physical activity level*. Specifically, different levels of teaching experience groups showed a statistically significant difference in S & M domain $F(2,79) = 8.495$, $p < .001$ whereas different type of schools showed a statistically significant difference in S & M and PD domain $F(2,79) = 9.693$, $p = .000$ and $F(2,79) = 3.515$, $p = .034$. Gender, years of teaching experience and working experience as a principal had P -value $> .05$.

Furthermore, level of academic qualifications revealed that there were differences in attitude in PD, S and A and R and C domain $F(4,77) = 3.023$, $p = .023$; $F(4,77) = 3.388$, $p = .013$ and $F(4,77)$, $p = .015$ (Table 4). Similarly, attitude among different professional qualifications demonstrated a statistically significant difference in PD and S & A domains $F(3,78) = 4.374$, $p = .007$ and $F(3,78) = 3.717$, $p = .015$. However, post hoc Tukey result in S & A domain between Certification & Degree in Education had a p -value of $.063^{**}$ (Table 4). The researcher suspects that one or more of the pairwise comparisons was borderline

and one of those almost had to be significant ($p=.063$). These findings of course need to be interpreted with caution because they were not statistically significant as it may be due to small sample size and low power.

Physical activity levels also showed differences in principals' attitude scores in R and C, S and A and S and M domains $F(3,78) = 2.842$, $p = .024$; $F(3,78) = 3.177$, $p = .029$ and $F(3,78) = 3.311$, $p = .043$. Post hoc Tukey result in R & C domain between Sedentary & Active had a p -value of $.065^{**}$ which needs to be interpreted with caution (Table 4). Gender and working experiences as a principal had P value $> .05$.

DISCUSSION

Based on previous research conducted on teachers' perception towards school administrators' leadership in PE, a majority of findings indicated that the teachers felt school leaders had not been providing a supportive role in managing the Instructional Programme or promoting a positive PE learning climate (Wee, 2019).

Surprisingly, this current study revealed differing results, in which school leaders had shown a positive attitude in the four common domains of leadership. The overall attitude leans towards a more positive note; however, within each investigated attribute showed different degree of favourable attitude, e.g., types of schools, academic level, professional qualification, and physical activity levels. Types of schools and years of teaching experience contributed differences in the S and M domain whereas academic and professional qualifications

showed major differences in the PD and S & A domains. Most studies in Malaysian school settings revealed that administrators placed less emphasis on implementing and monitoring of PE (e.g., Wee, 2019) as school administrators were more concerned about other “core” subjects and less concerned about taking corrective action after a PE supervision. To some degree, the findings of the current study held some consistency with the above studies, depending on types of schools. The study revealed that principals leaned more towards managerial behaviour rather than the integration of functional and personal touch. They widely acknowledged the importance of professional development (PD) by allocating budgets, yet questionnaires showed that the topic of PD ranked the lowest in conversations between teachers and principals in how to improve PE. Besides, a majority of principals attempted to allocate sufficient budget for the PE subject but implied funding from the government fell short in this aspect, especially considering the expensive prices of equipment.

Academic and Professional Qualification

With the findings from this study, it may be noted that as one is more educated, there is a higher likelihood that they will see the importance of having adequate funding as well as upskilling the teachers in providing quality PE. It is believed that the quality of school learning is determined by the performance of principals (Andriani et al., 2018). As principals are the determinant

of a school learning experience, thus, it is clear that the principal's performance and leadership significantly influences the quality of learning. A school principal requires a series of appropriate leadership skills to raise standards of achievement, leading school improvement, maintaining school effectiveness, and enhancing the quality of teaching in schools (Piaw et al., 2014). Such studies confirm the association that quality education and teaching in schools were seen to be influenced by the educational background of the principal (Purwanto, 2001). If a school principal has a higher academic or professional qualification, the quality of education and teaching received by the students will be better. A possible explanation for this might be that when the principals believe in personal development, they will also support the welfare teachers to ensure quality PE learning and teaching experience.

Types of Schools and Years of Teaching Experience

One unanticipated finding was that principals from different types of schools (SK, SJKC & SJKT) demonstrated varying degrees of attitude in supervising and evaluating teachers' PE lessons as well as the monitoring of students' progress. Notably, despite SJKC schools leaning towards a positive attitude, they promote a far less positive school culture in instructional supervision and professional development as compared to SK and SJKT. It is believed that this stems from how the social and cultural imperatives of PE have been increasingly disregarded,

resulting in the perceived low social value of PE and PA in contributing to society (Peters, 2015).

Meaningful PE experiences are influenced by the value the learner attributes to PE (Chen, 1998). The value towards PE and positive engagement of PE are greatly influenced by demographical or socioeconomic factors such as gender and family background (Beni et al., 2017). Reconnecting back to an earlier literature review by Allport (1935) on how experiences affect decision making, the review is supported Rickwood (2012) that if principals have negative experiences with PE educators or PE itself during their younger days or have undergone a perceived low-quality PE programme, such experiences may have an impact on the principal's intention to promote PE. Prior to becoming a principal, he/she had gone through a period of teaching, and this experience enhanced their existing beliefs about their roles and responsibilities as a teacher (Pajares, 1992). During that time, their belief of PA and PE may have been further reinforced by the existing school culture towards PA and PE, which was either negative or positive. Their perception of education, instructional behaviours, and student learning outcomes was then influenced by these personal experiences which substantially formed their values and beliefs (Xiang et al., 2002). As such, if principals go through a school culture that puts little priority in supervision of PE instructional programmes and professional development, he/she may impose a similar

culture in future schools that he/she will lead. In the end, favourable attitudes and the active promotion of PE in schools appear to be related to past behaviours that precede intentions for future behaviour as suggested by Rizzo's (2020) study.

Another compelling attribute that affected the various degrees of favourable attitude towards the implementation of quality PE is the years of teaching experience. While there was no significant difference in the overall attitude towards the implementation of quality PE, it is worth noting that years of teaching experience plays a role in one of the implementation's sub-scale domain - supervision and monitoring. Hou et al. (2019) found that the difference between experience phases influences quality curriculum implementation, as principals with higher number of years in the teaching profession will result in higher school effectiveness & performance. In other words, years of teaching experiences shape the way principals lead schools and PE. Hence, promoting a positive and quality school learning climate is directly influenced by what a principal has gone through their lifetime as a teacher.

Physical Activity Level

Interestingly, although the results show a favourable attitude towards all domains of implementation, there is an absolute difference in that positive attitude among principals who are sedentary and active. The results indicated that school principals who were involved in organised physical activity were more likely to possess a higher

favourable attitude towards administering quality PE programmes as compared to less active principals. This is possibly due to their positive personal meaningfulness with PE that translates into confidence to promote quality PE (Rizzo, 2020). Another possibility is that these principals enjoyed experiences that were fun, social, stimulating, and satisfying, leading them to commit to a physically active lifestyle (Beni et al., 2017). Generally, taking a strong interest in healthy living means that one believes in promoting PE. With that, the supportive roles in leading the PE programme in many ways contributes to the improvement of school culture for physical educators (Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2007) and, in turn, may enhance academic performance for students through increased participation in quality PE.

Gender

Numerous studies carried out stated that males tend to favour a more positive attitude towards PE subjects. Females, even with a positive perception towards PE, did not translate into actual practice during PE lessons. With such results, perhaps it is natural to conclude that females tend to have a lower attitude as compared to males. But we cannot generalise it to include adults as those studies were done with children and adolescents. In Coulter et al.'s (2020) study, parents (male and female) had positive attitudes towards their school's PE programme. Having said that, the current results do not show any differences in the implementation of a quality PE programme

between both genders. In other words, both female and male principals favour PE and believe in the importance of it. In this sense, whether female or male principals run the schools, both genders do behave similarly when carrying out a quality PE programme. It is possible that in the 21st century, our society's views have massively changed towards gender roles, such that females are no longer expected to hold different attitudes or adopt different values than male counterparts, as traditionally polarised (Boutilier & San Giovanni, 1983).

Implication

The current study demonstrates that principals' attitude is favourable towards quality PE implementation, and it does not share similar sentiments with previous studies (Wee, 2019). In general, principals' attitudes and behaviours may not be intentional if they were seen to display a negative propensity towards PE. They may have been silent cheerleaders, supporting the efforts of PE teachers. Whilst the principals may have a more positive inclination, this disposition may not have shared with the same eagerness as their lieutenants i.e., senior assistants. Often, senior assistants are empowered to manage the school's curriculum so there may be a clash of different attitudes towards PE.

Different types of schools may place different priorities in quality PE implementation. Such connections likely exist in schools with a majority of one single ethnicity, which ultimately projects their social values towards PE. It is believed

that cultural differences such as ethnic background and upbringing have an impact on PE, sport, and other leisure activities (Figueroa, 1993). The findings implicate that active individuals may help to strive for a physically educated and physically active school community.

It should be noted that this study was carried out during the nation's first outbreak of COVID-19, where physical education classes were amongst the earliest subjects to be cancelled due to health and safety concerns. With the outbreak and the nation's Movement Control Order (MCO), all subjects' instructional time were reduced to 1-2 hours screen time per day for online learning, including PE (KPM, 2020). To date, a few studies have shown that the effects of long-term school closure on learning due to natural disasters have impacted students' academic development (Andrabi et al., 2020). Likewise, the potential impact of this pandemic on students' holistic development has aroused deep concern amongst educators (Arumugam, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Evidently, possessing a positive attitude is the first step to quality PE, and cultivating an active school culture through physically active teachers and administrators will definitely raise the value of physical education.

Although the current study is based on a low response rate of participants, the findings suggest that principals play their roles to create positive PE environments. It is advocated that future research considers

a larger geographic area and socioeconomic status of other school districts in other parts of Malaysia to explain the differences found between the different ethnicities, academic and professional qualification at Malaysian primary schools. Moreover, further research needs to closely examine the links between administrators, especially principals, senior assistants and teachers. There is also a need to study the correlation between school culture and teachers and administrators' intention of promoting quality PE. Future research should therefore focus on the investigation of leadership in PE and the intention to further promote PE.

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