

Upper Primary School Student Attitude Towards Health and Physical Education Programme in Bhutan

Ugyen Choden, Ugyen Namdel and Kezang Sherab

Abstract

Student attitude toward Health and Physical Education (HPE) formed during childhood can influence the choices they make in daily lives to be active or to remain sedentary. Therefore, this study investigated the attitude of upper primary students toward HPE for the first time in the Bhutanese education system ever since the programme was introduced in 1999. This is important for Bhutan whose vision is to promote gross national happiness. The study employed a quantitative approach with a survey design consisting five major themes- attitude towards HPE, perception of teacher's instruction, perception of benefits of HPE, attitude towards participation in HPE classes, and perception of support system for resources. A total of 1087 upper primary students (male= 568 & female= 519) responded to the survey from seven dzongkhags. The findings generally showed a positive attitude and much higher perceptions of HPE. More specifically Class V students showed much higher perceptions on benefits of HPE compared to Classes IV and VI, while students in urban schools revealed a positive attitude towards HPE compared to semi-urban students. Implications of the study and recommendations for improvement are discussed.

Keywords: *Attitude, Health and Physical Education, Upper Primary Students, Perception*

Attitude is the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary American psychology (Allport, 1968). The most important way in which attitude influences our lives is our attitude towards physical activity (PA) (Nelson, Benson, & Jensen, 2010). Those who have a positive attitude toward PA are likely to lead a healthy lifestyle as a part of their lives, whereas those who have a negative attitude are not (Phillips & Silverman, 2015). Attitudes formed during childhood can influence the choices one makes in daily lives to be active or to remain sedentary. It is important to identify the attitude of students towards Health and Physical Education (HPE) at an early age. A number of scholars have stressed that student attitude could influence participation in future PA (Cameron, Norgan, & Ellison, 2006; Rady & Schimdt, 2013; Silverman, Keating, & Phillips, 2008; Zeng, 2011). Furthermore, the attitude of a student is likely to determine their choice of activities. Existing literature suggests that a person's attitude is developed from their personal belief system. These belief systems are formed at a young age and once these belief systems take hold, they eventually impact a person's attitude (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Sabini, 1995; Silverman & Subramaniam, 1999). It is imperative that students form a positive attitude towards HPE during their formative years so that they are able to continuously participate in PA.

Student attitude toward HPE has been proven worldwide as one of the gateways to a healthy body with a healthy mind. Therefore, this study investigated the attitude of upper primary students toward HPE for the first time in the Bhutanese education system. The HPE is a learning process that contributes to the optimum development of an individual's potential including health, growth and development, and physical and psycho-social competencies through a balanced and coherent range of physical activities (REC, 2016). Research indicates that the HPE makes a significant contribution to the total education of the human being by means of movement, play, and sport (Haag, 2003; Sherab, 2001; Gyeltshen, 2013).

Though the potential benefits of HPE programme in the Bhutanese education system were understood and recognised, it took some time for Bhutan to integrate the programme in the school curriculum (only in 1999) because of other competing needs and priorities (Sherab, 2001). One of the key reasons for the introduction of HPE in the Bhutanese education system in 1999 was the concern that the school children started adopting a sedentary lifestyle. It was observed that:

The Bhutanese lifestyle is changing rapidly as development expands. Unlike in the past, many school children now have a tendency for leading a sedentary life. Much of their free time outside the school is increasingly spent on activities ranging from viewing video films to loitering around without many physical activities. Such a sedentary and physically inactive lifestyle especially amongst the school children can be detrimental to their academic attainments because children who are physically fit and healthy can think, concentrate and learn better. (CAPSD (1999, p. 1)

However, the existing research has shown that there were several drawbacks for the successful implementation of HPE. Some of these drawbacks were the lack of appropriate curriculum, facilities, trained and specialized HPE teachers, management support, and not aware of the importance of physical movement (Sherab, 2001) and not much has changed even after twelve years (Gyeltshen, 2013).

However, the Government initiated the development of a new HPE curriculum which was introduced in 2008 as an interdisciplinary approach that deals with the concepts of health, interpersonal relationships, life skills and physical activities (REC, 2012). It emphasizes the knowledge of nutrition, habits and understanding the core regular physical activities necessary to guide and influence learners to practice physical activities as an integral part of their life. The curriculum is based on the ideals of healthy living, and that when cascaded to others in the society develop the community that possesses the fundamental health literacy to lead a healthy life (Sherab, 2001).

Internationally, the need for quality HPE curriculum in schools is increasingly recognized, mainly for the promotion of students' knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for leading active and healthy lifestyles (REC, 2016; UNESCO, 2015). The development of a sound HPE programme in school can also support in building youths who are psychologically and physically healthy, which makes up two of the nine domains of Gross National Happiness (GNH) – the development philosophy that Bhutan expounds (Gyeltshen, 2013). Therefore, the HPE programme has the huge potential to contribute towards the national vision of promoting happiness. To work towards this vision, it is crucial that young children in the schools develop a positive attitude towards HPE.

Ever since the HPE was introduced in the Bhutanese primary schools in 1999 and the implementation of the new curriculum in 2008, nobody has studied student attitude. Considering the importance of implementing such educational innovation successfully from the formative years of education, this study examined the upper primary students' attitude towards HPE.

Significance of the study

This study is the first of its kind in the Bhutanese context and is significant in several ways. The findings of this study add to the existing body of knowledge and benefit various organizations and individuals, both within and outside the education ministry. First, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in terms of understanding the Bhutanese students' attitude toward HPE. Second, the findings of this study are useful to the Ministry of Education (MoE) in making research-informed policy decisions related to the implementation of the HPE curriculum in schools. Third, this study provides insights in reviewing and modifying the existing HPE for upper primary schools to make it more responsive to the developmental needs and interests of students. Thus, making HPE more friendly and lively educational experience for students. Fourth, this study may help the school management and the teachers to understand the impact and significance of the HPE in the holistic development of students that are healthy at the head, hands, and heart (3H).

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore the attitude of upper primary students toward participating and learning HPE.

Research questions

1. What is the upper primary students' attitude toward HPE, perception on teacher's instruction, perception on benefits of HPE, attitude towards participation in HPE classes, and perception on the support system for resources?
2. Is there any correlation between student attitude towards HPE, perception on teacher's instruction, perception on benefits of HPE, attitude towards participation in HPE classes, and perception on the support system for resources?
3. Is there any difference in the attitude of upper primary students in terms of their class level, gender, and location of the school?

Literature Review

The main purpose of this study was to explore the Bhutanese upper primary students' attitude toward school HPE. Existing literature indicates that student attitude toward HPE is an important determinant of their participation in physical activities outside of school. For instance, research in Kuwait has shown that students consider physical education (PE) classes as fun, makes them feel happy and satisfied, keeps them fit and healthy, and acquire more friends (Mohammad & Mohammad, 2012). While anecdotal evidence shows that this could be true in Bhutan, currently there is a lack of research. Research by Pirot (1993) in Western Australia for secondary level found that both girls and boys held positive attitudes toward compulsory physical education; however, boys' attitudes were more positive than girls. Research also suggests that as the class level increased, attitudes towards compulsory PE were less positive for both boys and girls collectively. A similar study by Ramiz (2009) in Turkish high schools indicated a significant difference in students' attitude toward PE. The attitude mean scores of boys were higher than those of girls. These differences in attitude in terms of gender and class level have implications on the successful implementation of the HPE. Would this be similar to the Bhutanese upper primary students? It is important that such differences are identified and addressed at the earliest.

A recent study by Tulin and Merve (2016) in Ardahan, Turkey concluded that students' class, gender, place of residence, parents' level of education, level of income and number of siblings did not affect the PE and sports lesson attitude scores of secondary school students who were between the ages 11 and 14 years. Due to the lack of research in the Bhutanese context, it is not sure if the situation could be similar. However, it could be tentatively speculated that there could be differences in terms of students' class level and gender.

Teachers play an important role in the successful implementation of any educational innovations (Sherab, 2017; Yero, 2010; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Fullan, 1999). Yero (2010) rightly argues that "teachers have always had the power to determine the tone and direction of a school, to create exemplary worlds within the classroom, and to scuttle reform movements that failed to fit their mental models" (2010, p. xiv). If HPE is to be successfully implemented in the Bhutanese schools, it is important that HPE teachers are knowledgeable and skilled and that they are able to motivate their students to actively participate in HPE classes. One way to measure whether HPE teachers are able to motivate their students is to examine student attitude towards HPE and their perceptions, which is the intention of this study.

There is plenty of student attitude research on HPE at the high school level (Atan & Imamoğlu; 2016; Zeng, Hipscher, & Leung, 2011; Ramiz, 2009; Rikard & Banville, 2006; Villegas, 2001; Pirot 1993) which shows that students usually prefer a wide variety of sport and fitness activities, an increase in level of challenge in PE classes, and an increase in student motivation for participating in activities outside of school (Rikard & Banville, 2006). They also found that student attitudes were accepting or tolerant of participation in fitness activities due to known health benefits. Most students liked PE classes that included some form of gameplay. In addition, they stressed the need for adding interesting activities that included active participation while having fun. Student recommendations included strategies for improving instruction and for grouping students by skill levels for an appropriate challenge. Another study in California (USA) mentions that high school students were active only when they were enrolled in PE classes and were rarely physically active outside the class (Villegas, 2001). Such finding has implications on school HPE. If schools do not have a strong HPE, students are likely to lead a sedentary lifestyle outside of the school. This, in turn, has implications on the overall development of a nation. As such Bhutan has been already making a huge investment on the treatment of lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cancers (Yangchen, Tobgay, & Melgaard, 2017).

Among the significant importance that HPE has on the holistic development of the children, health-related fitness programme plays a vital role in promoting a healthy lifestyle in early education. Colquitt and Langdon (2012) explored student attitudes toward PE among students in Georgia (USA) after the state implemented a policy requiring statewide fitness testing with the purpose of addressing the social and emotional health of students- as advocated in the Coordinated School Health Model. They concluded that student attitude toward PE can serve as a facilitating factor for health-related fitness. So, finding out student attitude toward the HPE is important considering the health benefits that they acquire from the programme.

Lack of facilities is seen to be one of the prominent drawbacks in implementing HPE in schools successfully (Sherab, 2001). According to Sherab (2001) due to large class size

(On average 40 to 50 students in a class) in the Bhutanese context, provision of basic infrastructure and sufficient equipment play a significant role in implementing the HPE. Limited space restricts free movement, therefore when the class becomes too congested it is not safe to conduct most activities. Hastie and Saunders (1991) examined the effects of two different environmental conditions upon the classroom behaviours of teachers and students in Australia. Student involvement showed significantly more motor appropriate activity and more cognitive and less organizational activity in classes where there were unlimited amounts of equipment available irrespective of class size. The teacher decision making and resultant pupil opportunity to respond were strongly influenced by environmental variables and that such environments can be both systematic and predictable. Besides teaching style of the instructor, curriculum and school infrastructure were also the main determinants of student attitude towards PE (Bozoğlu & Göktürk, 2016). This study aimed to explore if Bhutanese upper primary students' attitude is being determined by factors such as their teachers' teaching style, curriculum, and resources.

Quite surprisingly there is a lack of research on upper primary school students' attitude toward HPE. A literature search using Google Scholar and ResearchGate found only two such studies. For instance, a study by Phillips and Silverman (2015) in the United States that explored upper primary student attitude found an overall positive attitude toward PE. Their study also concluded that the attitude toward PE did not differ in terms of gender. In terms of class level, class IV students exhibited positive attitude compared to class V students. Another study by Adamcak and Bartik (2014) in Slovakia concluded that as students move higher up in terms of class level (especially from primary to secondary) their attitude towards PE declines as they undergo transition facing different learning environment. This is something that this study explored in the Bhutanese context.

Methods and Materials

Research approach and design

The study employed a quantitative approach with the self-administered survey design (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011; Creswell, 2012). The stratified random sampling in terms of class level, location, and dzongkhag was employed and members were randomly selected from each group for data collection. Permission for the conduct of surveys was obtained from the Director of the School Education, MoE and the respective school principals. The researchers visited the schools for survey administration except for the two remote dzongkhags of Pemagatshel and Mongar. For these two dzongkhags, HPE teachers from a few schools were contacted via Facebook and the questionnaires were sent to them through email. Prior to the survey, the researchers explained to the students the purpose of the survey and the process for responding to each of the items in the survey to avoid any confusion. A total of 1087 (72.5% response rate) students responded to the survey out of 1500 questionnaires distributed.

The questionnaire had a total of 28 items, first two were related to demographic information while the other 26 were based on a 5-point Likert type items ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither Disagree nor Agree (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5), measuring five different themes: i) attitude towards HPE (6 items); ii) perception of teacher's instruction (4 items); iii) perception of the benefits of HPE (7 items); iv) attitude toward participation in HPE classes (5 items); and perception of support system for resources (4 items).

Data Analysis and Findings

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23, was used for analysis. After entering the data from the questionnaire into the SPSS database, a thorough screening process was undertaken to confirm that the data were entered correctly and to understand the distributive analysis of the items. A few wrong entries were sorted out after crosschecking with the original responses in the questionnaire. Items showed no substantive none normality in terms of values. The cases of missing values were also observed to be minimal and without any patterns. The presentation and analysis of data are grouped into three categories answering each of the three research questions: i) overall level of student attitude and perceptions related to different themes; ii) correlation analysis to check if the five themes have any significant relationship or not; iii) MANOVA analyses to compare student attitude and perceptions in terms of gender, class level and location of the school.

Demographic Information

A total of 1087 upper primary students responded to the survey from eight dzongkhags (see Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics (n=1087)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Class level	4	380	35.0
	5	342	31.5
	6	365	33.6
Gender	Male	568	52.3
	Female	519	47.7
Location	Urban	730	67.2
	Semi-urban	357	32.8
Dzongkhag	Samtse	87	8.0
	Chukha	262	24.1
	Paro	124	11.4
	Thimphu	184	16.9
	Haa	251	23.1
	Pemagatshel	81	7.5
	Mongar	98	9.0

Level of student attitude and perceptions

To understand the overall level of student attitude and their perceptions of HPE, the score for each item under each of the five themes (theme 1= 6 items; theme 2= 4 items; theme 3= 7 items; theme 4= 5 items; and theme 5= 4 items) were aggregated to compute a mean score for each theme (see Table 2).

Table 2: The five themes with mean and SD

SL.N o	Theme	N	Mean	SD
1	Attitude towards HPE	1087	4.26	0.59
2	Perceptions of teachers' instruction	1086	4.14	0.63
3	Perceptions of the benefits of HPE	1087	4.36	0.52
4	Attitude towards participation in HPE classes	1058	4.00	1.38
5	Perceptions of support system for resources	1085	4.06	0.77
	Valid N (listwise)	1056		

As shown in Table 2 above, all the themes scored a mean between 4.00 and 4.36. For five-point Likert scale items, all the means appear to be on a higher side. However, relatively speaking the student *attitude towards participation in HPE classes* showed the lowest mean with the highest standard deviations (M= 4.00; SD= 1.38). This is followed by the student *perceptions of support system for resources* (M= 4.06; SD= 0.77). This is an indication that students who participated in this research comparatively did not show a robust attitude towards participation in HPE. They tend to show hesitation to participate in HPE classes actively because they are not good in movement skills, do not want to show their body, do not like to interact with others, do not like to wear sports attire, and that their HPE teacher does not like them. Students also showed comparatively lower perceptions of the kind of support they receive to attend HPE in their schools. More specifically the findings showed that schools do not have a good place to conduct HPE classes, no adequate equipment, no regular HPE classes, and no trained HPE teacher. Higher standard deviations of these two themes compared to the other three themes also indicated that these students have differences in their opinion when it comes to the attitude towards participation in HPE classes and their perceptions of support system.

Meanwhile, the two themes that showed the highest means were student *perceptions of benefits of HPE* (M= 4.36; SD= 0.52) and their *attitude towards HPE* (M= 4.26; SD= 0.59). Such findings suggest that these students are able to understand the benefits of HPE and that they also exhibit a strong positive attitude toward HPE. Much lower standard deviations demonstrate that these students have a similar opinion that the HPE benefits them by gaining confidence, making friends, improving knowledge on movement and sports skills, developing healthy habits, and help understand the value of regular participation in physical activities. The findings also showed that upper primary students have a positive attitude towards participation in competitive activities, playing fun activities, playing sports, HPE classes should be more than one period a week, HPE is for everybody, and that all students get equal opportunities to participate during HPE classes.

Correlation Analysis between the Five Themes

A correlation analysis was conducted to see if there are any significant correlations between student attitude towards HPE, their perceptions of the benefits of HPE, their attitude towards participation in HPE classes, and their perceptions on the support system for resources. As shown in Table 3, significant positive correlations were found between different themes except for students' attitude towards participation in HPE classes and their perceptions on the support system for resources. This is an indication that the increase in students' score for one theme is likely to increase the scores for all the other themes. For instance, an increase in students' attitude towards HPE is likely to increase their perception of

teacher's instruction, their perception of the benefits of HPE, their attitude towards participation in HPE classes, and their perception on the resource support system for HPE. Therefore, it is imperative that schools and HPE teachers give their best to inculcate a positive attitude towards HPE, higher perceptions of teacher's instruction, higher perceptions of the benefits of HPE, positive attitude towards participation in HPE classes, and higher perceptions on the support system for resources. Meanwhile, students' attitude towards participation in HPE classes does not seem to have any relation to their perception of whether the schools get good support in terms of resources or not for HPE classes.

Table 3: Correlations between different themes

		HPE				
		programme	Instruction	Benefits	Participation	Support
HPE programme	Pearson Correlation	1	.559**	.332**	.768**	.125**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	1087	1086	1087	1058	1085
Instruction	Pearson Correlation	.559**	1	.302**	.545**	.168**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	1086	1086	1086	1058	1084
Benefits	Pearson Correlation	.332**	.302**	1	.091**	.241**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.003	.000
	N	1087	1086	1087	1058	1085
Participation	Pearson Correlation	.768**	.545**	.091**	1	.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.003		.828
	N	1058	1058	1058	1058	1056
Support	Pearson Correlation	.125**	.168**	.241**	.007	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.828	
	N	1085	1084	1085	1056	1085

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Comparison of student attitude in terms of their class level, gender, and location

A total of three one-way MANOVAs (Multivariate Analysis) were conducted between the five themes (attitude towards HPE, perception of teacher's instruction, perception of the benefits of HPE, attitude towards participation in HPE classes and perception on support system for resources) as dependent variables and three demographic characteristics (class level, gender, and location) as independent variables to explore if there were any statistically significant differences in the scores of the five dependent variables. Inspection of Box'M Test showed significance ($p < 05$) for two MANOVAs (class level and location) indicating that observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables were not equal across groups. However, an examination of the standard deviations for various groups showed that differences were minimal. Levene's tests for each of the five dependent variables were produced to check homogeneity of variances. While two of the dependent variables (gender and location) were not significant ($p > .001$) for each MANOVA, attitude towards HPE, attitude towards participation in HPE class, and perception on the support system for resources in terms of class level showed significant ($p > .001$). However, an inspection of the standard deviation for these three themes showed relatively small differences between the grouping categories,

which suggested that violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances had not been very serious. Thus, the findings indicated that MANOVA should be interpreted.

Results of Multivariate F-tests

The overall MANOVA F-tests (see Table 4) showed a significant difference for class level and location and marginal significance for gender.

Table 4: MANOVA results showing significant differences

Effect	Wilks Lamda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Class	.938	6.811	10.000	2098.000	.001	.031
Location	.933	15.148	5.000	1050.000	.001	.067
Gender	.985	3.244	5.000	1050.000	.007	.015

Results of Univariate F-tests

Univariate F-tests were examined for class level, location, and gender to identify which theme contributed to the significance. Furthermore, Posthoc Tukey HSD multiple comparisons tests were consulted for a class level to identify which categories were significantly different. According to the results of univariate F-tests, as shown in Table 5, the benefits of HPE and support system for resources showed significant differences on class level. Attitude towards HPE programme, teacher's instruction, benefits of HPE, and support system for resources showed significant difference and participation in HPE classes showed marginally significant differences on location. However, an examination of the effect size as measured by Partial Eta Squared (see Table 5) for all the significant variables indicated that the actual variance explained in the mean values between various categories were very small. Meanwhile, none of the themes showed significant differences on gender.

Table 5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects with significant results

MANOVA effect	Dependent variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Error df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Class	Benefits of HPE	7.072	2	1053	13.539	.001	.025
	Support systems for resources	12.749	2	1053	11.010	.001	.020
Location	Attitude towards the HPE programme	13.192	1	1054	38.966	.001	.036
	Teacher's instruction	15.725	1	1054	42.616	.001	.039
	Benefits of HPE	4.731	1	1054	17.977	.001	.017
	Participation in HPE classes	17.087	1	1054	9.001	.003	.008
	Support system for resources	11.582	1	1054	19.985	.001	.019

Inspection of mean and standard deviations for each of the grouping variable showed the following results:

In terms of class level, the mean for perceptions of benefits of HPE and support system for resources differed significantly. Consultation of Posthoc Tukey multiple comparison tests showed that class 5 students' mean was significantly higher ($M = 4.48$; $SD = 0.51$) than for Class 4 students ($M = 4.31$; $SD = 0.51$) as well as for class 6 students ($M = 4.31$; $SD = 0.52$). Furthermore, Class 4 students' mean for perception on support system for resources was significantly higher ($M = 4.21$; $SD = 0.77$) than for Class 5 students ($M = 3.99$; $SD = 0.82$) as well as for Class 6 students ($M = 3.98$; $SD = 0.70$).

In terms of location, the mean for urban students was significantly higher than the mean for semi-urban students for all the five themes (see Table 6).

Table 6: Mean and SD for the location of the school

Theme	Urban		Semi-urban	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Attitude towards HPE	4.33	0.57	4.09	0.61
Perception of teacher's instruction	4.22	0.63	3.96	0.56
Perception of benefits of HPE	4.41	0.50	4.27	0.54
Attitude towards participation in HPE classes	4.09	1.36	3.82	1.41
Perception of the support system for resources	4.14	0.76	3.91	0.76

Discussion

While there is a lack of research in the Bhutanese context, there have been numerous studies conducted to understand student attitude toward HPE in other contexts. This is an indication that student attitude plays an important role in the success of the school HPE. However, most of these research works are at the secondary schools (Atan & Imamoglu; 2016; Pirot, 1993; Ramiz, 2009; Rikard & Banville, 2006; Villegas, 200; Zeng, Hipscher, & Leung, 2011) and not much at the primary school level (Adamcak & Bartik, 2014; Phillips & Silverman, 2015). Therefore, this study adds to the existing literature on upper primary student attitude toward HPE from the Bhutanese perspective. Understanding primary school student attitude is more important as they are in their foundation years. When students in primary school develop a positive attitude, it is likely that they also become active outside of the school. These students will not only experience success in their HPE classes throughout their school life but also become active and healthy adults. This has the potential to contribute towards achieving the national vision of gross national happiness.

Findings from this study corroborated with earlier findings of Phillips and Silverman (2015) and Adamcak and Bartik (2014) that upper primary students generally exhibit a positive attitude toward HPE. Furthermore, this study also showed that upper primary students in Bhutan have higher perceptions about their teacher's instruction, benefits of HPE classes, and support system for resources. Such findings indicate that HPE is likely to be successfully implemented in Bhutanese schools. However, relatively speaking student attitude toward participation in HPE classes and their perception of support system for resources were not as robust as other themes.

This study found that student attitude toward HPE, their perception of teacher's instruction, perception of benefits of HPE, attitude towards participation in HPE classes, and perception on the support system for resources were positively correlated against each other. This is an indication that each of these themes has an influence over the other and that relevant stakeholders such as the MoE, REC, school management, and teachers provide more emphasis on supporting students experience success in their HPE. Meanwhile, student attitude towards participation in HPE classes and their perception of support system for resources did not show any relationship, indicating that student perception toward support system for resources is unlikely to affect the nature of student attitude toward participation in HPE classes.

The overall findings from this study showed that student attitude and perceptions differed in terms of class level and location of school while gender did not show any significant differences. In terms of class level, evidence from this study indicates that class V students had much higher perceptions in terms of benefits of HPE compared to the Classes IV and VI students. As shown by earlier research (Adamcak & Bartik, 2014; Hodgkin, 2014; Subramaniam, 2018), both Classes IV and VI are in a transitional period and hence they experience decline in their perception of how HPE benefits them in terms of gaining confidence, making friends, improve my knowledge on movement skills, improve sport skills, develop healthy habits, and importance of participating in regular PA. Class IV students face the transition from lower primary to upper primary and Class VI students from upper primary to lower secondary. However, it is important that in-depth research in the future be carried out to explore the deeper meaning behind such differences. In terms of student perception on the support system for resources, Class IV students exhibited much higher perceptions compared to Class V and VI students. This finding corroborated with earlier findings that with the increase in the class level there is a decrease in student attitude (Subramaniam, 2018). Furthermore, research also shows that as students enter the age of puberty, they tend to develop a negative attitude towards HPE. However, this issue merits further investigation.

Findings from this study confirmed earlier findings of Chatterjee (2013) that students in urban schools revealed a positive attitude toward HPE compared to their counterparts in the semi-urban schools. Furthermore, this study found that urban school students had much higher perceptions of teacher's instruction, benefits of HPE, and support system for resources.

These findings could be attributed to better facilities and infrastructure in urban schools compared to semi-urban schools (Chatterjee, 2013). According to Eraslan (2015), one of the plausible reasons could be related to parents' lifestyle. Parents who exercise and lead active life seems to directly influence the attitude and perceptions of their children toward HPE.

Conclusion

Student attitude plays an important role in determining their future actions. It is therefore important that relevant stakeholders understand student attitude and address any pertinent issues. Findings from the current study revealed for the first time Bhutanese upper primary students' attitude towards HPE, which is an addition to the existing knowledge. This also helps to further expand on the limited understanding of the upper primary students' attitude towards HPE at the international level. Finding from this study has practical as well as policy implications. Teachers and schools need to put in more effort to raise the attitude

of the students in terms of participation in HPE classes and provide required resources for the successful conduct of HPE classes. It also has implications for semi-urban schools as well as for the parents. Semi-urban schools need to focus on improving facilities and infrastructure and it is important for parents to model active lifestyle. More such research needs to be carried out at the national level to further validate the current findings.

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About the Authors

Ugyen Choden is a Lecturer at Paro College of Education. She has a master's degree in Physical Education from Lovely Professional University in Punjab, India. She teaches Health and Physical Education for both Diploma and B. Ed programmes. She is currently the Officiating Programme Leader for Diploma in Sports Coaching and Physical Education programme. Her research interests are in youth fitness, student attitude towards HPE, self-efficacy beliefs of HPE teachers and blended learning. Currently she is involved in an International project on Blended Learning and plays active role in promoting blended learning in the Bhutanese schools.

Ugyen Namdel is an Associate Lecturer teaching Health and Physical Education and Creative Arts at Paro College of Education. He holds Bachelor's degree in Physics and Health and Physical Education from Samtse College of Education. He has a vast experience in preparing illustrations for RNDA manual with MoE/UNICEF, teachers manual and text books for Value Education, HPE and EVS subjects, and MCH Handbook for MoH. He has also contributed in writing HPE Text book.

Kezang Sherab is an Assistant Professor (PhD in Education) at Paro College of Education. He teaches health and physical education and research methodology courses. Kezang has published on a variety of educational topics and has led many educational consultancies. His expertise and research interest are in the educational evaluation, GNH Education, efficacy beliefs, educational research methods, use of SPSS and MaxQDA for data analysis, action research, educational change, student engagement, non-cognitive skills, and youth fitness.