



CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Having a healthy mind, body and spirit are three of the most important aspects of life in general. Keeping these three factors in a healthy state requires work, knowledge, and stamina. One very important element of keeping a healthy mind, body and spirit is keeping your body physically fit. Health in terms of physical fitness has been defined by many knowledgeable scholars and organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) that defined “health” as the condition when humans have a good balance in their physical, mental, spiritual and social lives (World Health Organization, 1974). Being free of illnesses and disabilities is a direct benefit of being physically fit. People do not become strong unless their health, both physical and mental, is sound. (Suchart Soamprayoun, 1997).

Physical fitness is the ability to control our bodies and minds by persistently and diligently performing the proper tasks, at the appropriate level for the appropriate length of time needed to maintain a healthy balance in our bodies. One way of motivating people to develop and keep physically fit is to promote an exercise program. Not only does exercise help keep us physically healthy, but it also helps to keep our internal organs, including our brains, functioning properly in order to endure our surroundings and everyday living. Being physically fit can mean the difference between

having a happy healthy life with loving friends and family and being ill or handicapped and having those friends and family members taking on the burden of caring for you.

Today, people's health behaviors tend to show a change due to the competitive environment that they work in. Because people are busy, they tend to get an insufficient amount of rest and relaxation time and that can lead to stress and other health problems. Modern technologies allow us to work easier and do less physical activities during a routine day but that could result in harm to one's health. This can be noted by an increasing number of ill people with such diseases as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes mellitus (Ministry of Public Health, 2002) In Trang Province, the mortality rate for patients with cardiovascular disease has become the second greatest cause of death and is soon to become first in the sequence of people's health problems

Ministry of Public Health, 2002 which is reflected by their low interests in physical activity.

The researcher, as a public health worker, has kept in close contact and monitored the lifestyles of family's background in Huaiyod District, Trang Province from 1980 to the present. Special concern was shown for their interest in exercise, which is at a very low level of interest. Information provided by the group members of an exercise team (Annual of public health Trang Province 2000) in the year 2002, stated that there were only 2,893 people or only 4.77% of the total population of Huaiyod District, Trang Province who consistently participated in their exercise group.

It is clear that in order to maintain or increase our body strength we need to place constant attention on exercising it in order to keep it at an acceptable level. Everyone needs to consider the benefits of regular exercise and to continue on a regular exercise schedule.

In the past, the understanding of effective exercise was a strict program with a formal pattern, for example the minimum time per day spent on exercise for the best benefit needed to be at least 20 minutes. People used to think that in order to have a useful exercise program they must spend a lot of money on training gear and health club memberships. This is no longer true. Normal daily activities, such as cleaning the house, golfing and working in the garden is also exercise, but it has to be controlled, so the amount of exercise, and time spent on that exercise will give you the most benefit required to keep physically fit.

After much research and rethinking, the belief of needing 20 minutes per day of formal exercise has been changed. (Ministry of Public Health, 2002) A new concept of doing low intensity exercises, like walking or cleaning the house or washing the car, for less than 20 minutes each time and/or exercising for a total of at least 30 minutes during two sessions per day, will benefit our health as well. Common physical activities and daily practices of common exercises, for example, parking the car further away from your office and walking for about 20 minutes to the office or getting off the bus a couple of stops early and walking the rest of the way, is an easy way to get the daily exercise needed. On the return trip, getting about a 10-minute walk before reaching home, if you travel by bus, would total 30 minutes per day of exercise. (Center for

Disease Control,1996) Of course these examples would vary according to their current physical condition, age, physical abilities and other factors.

The Ministry of Public Health (2002) promoted exercise programs and encouraged people to improve their fitness by supplementing it with exercise that is particularly relevant to each person's health condition and the frequency of the exercise. These activities were designed to directly improve the efficiency of their functions systems such as respiratory system and cardiovascular system, which stimulates the heart to work with a higher efficiency and also extends the arteriole that carries the red blood cells for the growth process of the muscle. In addition, the extraction of oxygen from red blood cells for the biochemical process is also much improved, increasing the numbers of high-density lipoprotein, that is considered good cholesterol, and also improving glucose tolerance and the decline of insulin needs, which is totally effected by lowering the mortality rate of premature babies. (Pakdee Posiri, 2002) People's health would benefit, by not only doing formal exercises (or structured pattern) but also by including general lifestyle exercise (or informal patterns), such as housekeeping, doing your regular job and other physical activities (The Ministry of Public Health, 2002). Therefore, doing exercise has a positive impact on our health. There are various patterns of exercise to fit each persons needs according to their skills and ease of self-practice. Therefore, people need to pay attention to exercise intensively.

The researcher is intensely interested in the study of the factors involved in the practicing of physical activities for people who had become Family Health Leaders in

Huaiyot District, Trang Province. This study aims to find out the extent to which these factors influence their practice, for example, how FHLs decide which kind of activity they want to do, which source of information is the most important one to them, and whether the FHLs used the information they gained from their training sessions in their regular practice of exercise. Findings of this study will be beneficial to the improvement of a proper exercise program so that FHLs in order to encourage them to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle by maintaining a proper exercise program.

Research Questions

1. How often did the family health leaders practice exercises?
2. What were the factors that affected the family health leaders in practicing exercises?
3. How did the knowledge and attitude about exercises of the family health leaders relate to the exercises?

Objectives

1. To describe the physical activities, and to determine the frequency and intensity of the physical activities among the Family Health Leaders in Huaiyod District, of Trang Province.
2. To determine the following factors with regards to their physical activities.
 - 2.1 Social, cultural, and demographic factors
 - 2.2 Knowledge and attitude related to physical activities.
 - 2.3 Enabling and reinforcing factors related to physical activities.

3. To determine the relation between knowledge and attitude and the practice of physical activities among family health leaders.

Assumptions

1. The knowledge and attitude that the people have about exercise might be relevant to the practicing of exercise of those family health leaders.
2. The relevant factors of exercise might relate to the practicing of exercise on those family health leaders.

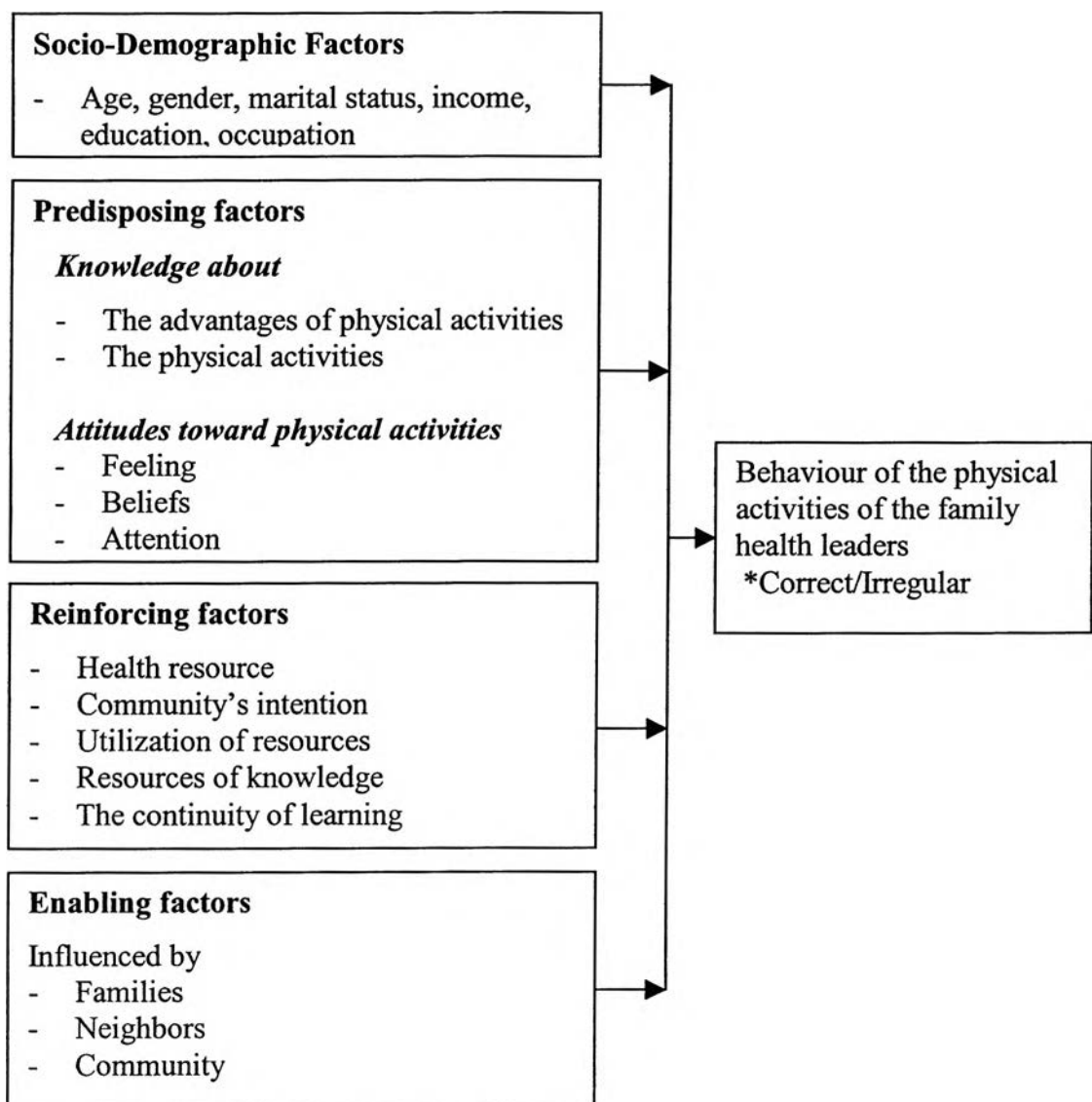
Definitions

1. The knowledge of exercise means the ability to recognize the processes or events by both directly and indirectly experiences and also being assessed by the testing form prepared by the researcher. (Piyanch Rakpanich, 2001)
2. The attitudes are the thoughts, feelings and trends of people's behavior which sometimes are positive such as favorite, agree, appreciation, support etc. or sometime are very negative such as dislike, disagree, angry, ban etc. Normally, the attitude is a renewal of a situation and inconsistent. (Prapapen Suwan, 1989)
3. The behaviors of an exercise mean the various forms of physical activities that are naturally performed on their skills, interests and their favorite exercises and how they behave when doing an exercise and the frequency of the exercise. (Ministry of Public Health, 2002)
4. The physical activities mean the intensity, which are at least at a medium level (breathing deeply without getting too tired and able to speak with other

people and a heart rate of approximately 60-80% of the peak (220 minus your age in years). (Ministry of Public Health, 2003)

5. The family health leaders mean the family member who was selected by the other members of the family mainly be responsible for arranging the health care of each of the family members. (Control data by Trang Provincial Health Office)

Conceptual Framework



(Green and Kreuter, 1991 p. 153)

Figure 1: Conceptual framework