

Enhancing Participation Rate of Learners with Physical Health Challenges Toward Quality Physical Education Improvement Plan

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Abstract

This quantitative study analyzed learners' achievement with physical health challenges in physical education classes, focusing on increasing their participation. The study evaluated the background of the teacher participants and found that most of the teaching staff were relatively young and female, with a sizable proportion between the ages of 30 - 34 having 1 to 10 years of teaching experience. With moderate attendance in professional development training, additional training focused on pedagogical approaches would enhance support for learners with physical health challenges. The data suggested that learners with physical health challenges participate in physical activities with suitable assistive tools and a conducive atmosphere. Accessible sports equipment and facilities and positive sociocultural attitudes significantly determine participation, underscoring the role of appropriate ownership of schools and adaptable frameworks. The teachers used various teaching methods, including differentiated instruction, cooperative learning,

task simplification, and positive feedback, which facilitated active participation by all learners. The research additionally found marked differences in the level of involvement as a function of teacher instructional experience and professional development, while students' gender did not affect engagement. Instructional strategy choice differed among male and female teachers and between more and less experienced teachers. Additionally, the strong positive relationship ($r = 0.82$, $p = 0.00$) between teaching techniques and learner involvement marks the centrality of active teaching in the inclusion of PE classes. To meet the outlined difficulties, a Quality Physical Education Improvement Plan was designed to provide specific strategies to increase participation levels and foster broader inclusivity within the PE program. This data underlines the gaps regarding consistent support in professional development, incorporating multi-faceted teaching methods and adaptable frameworks for physical education.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Physical Education Participation, Teaching Strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Physical Education (PE) plays a crucial role in fostering physical, cognitive, and social development among learners. However, students with physical health challenges often face significant

barriers to full participation, limiting their access to the benefits of an active and inclusive learning environment. Despite legislative and policy advancements promoting inclusive education, many schools still struggle to provide equitable opportunities for learners with disabilities in PE classes. This study examines the factors influencing participation rates among students with physical health challenges in the Division of Batangas, Philippines, and proposes evidence-based strategies to enhance inclusivity in physical education.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to bridge the gap between policy and practice in inclusive PE. While existing literature highlights the importance of adaptive teaching strategies, accessible facilities, and teacher preparedness, there remains a need for localized studies that address specific challenges within the Philippine educational context. Previous research (Haegele et al., 2021; Block & Obrusnikova, 2019) has emphasized the role of teacher training and resource availability in promoting inclusion, yet little is known about how these factors interact in public secondary schools in Batangas.

This study investigates the extent to which current PE programs accommodate learners with physical health challenges, the effectiveness of various teaching strategies, and the influence of teacher demographics on student engagement. By analyzing survey responses from 277 MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health) teachers, the research identifies key enablers and barriers to participation, including accessibility of facilities, socio-cultural attitudes, and professional development opportunities. Furthermore, the study explores the relationship between instructional methods—such as differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, and positive reinforcement—and student involvement.

The findings contribute to the broader discourse on inclusive education by providing actionable insights for policymakers, school administrators, and PE teachers. A Quality Physical Education Improvement Plan is proposed to address identified gaps, emphasizing teacher training, curriculum adaptation, and facility enhancements. Ultimately, this study seeks to ensure that all learners, regardless of physical ability, can actively engage in and benefit from quality physical education.

By aligning with global inclusive education frameworks (Ainscow, 2022; UNESCO, 2020) while addressing local realities, this research advances the goal of equitable participation in PE, fostering a more inclusive and empowering educational environment for students with physical health challenges.

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to thoroughly examine the participation rate of learners in the Division of Batangas with physical health problems in physical education, with a particular emphasis on suggesting targeted solutions for addressing the challenges they face when participating in physical activities.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive research method. This method is appropriate for this study as it aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the level of physical education inclusivity among students with physical health challenges, specifically proposing targeted solutions to identified challenges in participating in physical activities among students with physical health challenges. This method will allow the researcher to systematically observe, document, and describe the existing physical education activities and how inclusive they are for students with physical health challenges.

The researcher-made survey questionnaire and test were presented to the school head and other teachers with a Doctor of Philosophy in Physical Education and Sports for face and content validation.

After receiving the comments and suggestions, the researcher will revise the questionnaire to suit the respondents' comprehension. The researcher also conducted a dry run with the students who were not part of the study to further validate the survey questionnaire.

The researcher personally harvested the result of the answers in questionnaires by the researcher harvested the results of the respondents' questionnaire answers and ensured that the same number of responses was retrieved upon the administration of the survey through different online platforms and media available. Survey questionnaires were re-examined if all the items were filled out. The data that will be retrieved will be treated with the strictest confidentiality

This study's respondents were the 277 MAPEH instructors from public secondary schools in Batangas Province. The sample size was derived from the total population of 978, which was calculated through the Raosoft Calculator. These teachers shared significant insights into the tactics, problems, and improvements required to increase the participation rate of students with physical health challenges in physical education. Random sampling collected thorough data from those actively involved in physical education program delivery.

Results and Discussion

The Summary of Findings provides a total summary of the main results obtained from the research on improving the learners' participation rate with physical health difficulties in physical education for the Division of Batangas. This section condenses the most important data and information obtained during the investigation, highlighting the most critical outcomes regarding student participation, current barriers, and intervention possibilities. Through an integration of these results, the abstract identifies the dominant trends, relationships, and patterns directly influencing the inclusivity and effectiveness of physical education programs. These findings serve as the foundation for the following analyses and discussions, which eventually shape the Quality Physical Education Improvement Plan. By this organized presentation, the meaning and implications of the study in solving the research objectives are clearly indicated.

1. The study revealed that the majority of the 277 physical education teachers in the Division of Batangas were between the ages of 30–34 (37.91%) and 35–39 (24.19%), indicating that most are in their early to mid-career stages—likely contributing to their openness to innovative and inclusive teaching methods. In terms of gender, female teachers comprised the majority (62.45%), highlighting a gender disparity in inclusive PE roles, which may be influenced by societal perceptions of caregiving. Regarding teaching experience, over half (50.90%) had 1–10 years of experience, suggesting a young and dynamic teaching force, while 32.13% had 11–20 years, providing a balance between traditional and contemporary practices. Only 12.64% had 31–40 years of experience, and none exceeded 40 years, possibly due to retirement or career shifts. This distribution suggests that younger educators are more inclined to adopt modern pedagogical strategies and technologies for inclusive PE, though the absence of veteran teachers may limit mentorship opportunities and continuity in specialized teaching approaches.
2. From table 2.1 to table 2.3 found out that physical activity participation among students with physical health challenges is significantly influenced by the accessibility and suitability of sports facilities and equipment. Teachers reported high engagement levels when facilities were accessible, with accessibility and proper materials receiving the highest ratings. The school community was also found to be supportive and inclusive, as reflected in high scores related to attitudes of teachers and classmates (mean scores ranging from 3.22 to 3.43). However, assistive tools and technologies received the lowest rating (3.22), indicating the need for further improvement. Students identified an inclusive school

environment, available sports materials, and accessible facilities as key enablers of participation, with a composite mean of 3.09. Teacher and peer support played a critical role, as evidenced by very high mean scores (ranging from 3.50 to 3.71) in promoting engagement and confidence in physical education classes. The findings underscore that a positive, inclusive, and well-equipped environment, combined with strong motivational support from teachers and peers, significantly enhances the participation and well-being of students with physical health challenges.

3. Table 3.1 to table 3.6 revealed that the teachers extensively implement inclusive classroom strategies—such as Differentiated Instruction, Cooperative Learning, Task Simplification, and the use of Visual and Verbal Cues—to support learners with physical health challenges. Survey results indicated a "Great Extent" in adapting lesson content ($M = 3.36$), modifying teaching methods, and ensuring material accessibility. Cooperative learning was also emphasized, with teachers assigning roles based on individual student strengths ($M = 3.53$) and promoting inclusive group dynamics, though resource limitations were noted. Visual and verbal cues, including repetition and multimodal strategies, received high ratings ($M = 3.55$), underscoring their role in maintaining student understanding and engagement. Positive reinforcement emerged as the most widely used motivational technique ($M = 3.59$), highlighting teachers' efforts to boost participation and confidence among students with disabilities. Furthermore, frequent feedback and personalized encouragement ($M = 3.58$) were identified as critical in motivating students, suggesting that tailored motivational strategies significantly enhance learner involvement. The results emphasize that while inclusive teaching strategies are effectively applied, further improvements in resource availability and instructional customization are necessary to optimize learning experiences for students with physical health challenges.
4. The statistical analysis presented in Table 4 reveals significant differences in the participation levels of learners with physical health difficulties based on age ($p = 0.014$), years of teaching experience in PE ($p = 0.042$), and the number of trainings attended ($p = 0.008$), while no significant variation was observed based on sex ($p = 0.287$). These findings highlight that professional development and teaching experience play crucial roles in enhancing the inclusion and participation of learners with physical health challenges in PE activities, whereas gender does not significantly influence engagement levels. The data suggest that educators with more experience or relevant training are better equipped to implement inclusive practices that facilitate student involvement. Younger learners, on the other hand, may experience more participation barriers possibly linked to developmental or motivational factors. These results align with existing literature, such as Kirk and Haerens (2021), Bailey et al. (2020), and Dudley et al. (2022), emphasizing the importance of inclusive pedagogy and teacher preparedness. Furthermore, Deci and Ryan's (2020) Self-Determination Theory supports the notion that a supportive, competence-driven environment fosters intrinsic motivation, further reinforcing the value of experienced and well-trained teachers in promoting active and enthusiastic participation in physical education among students with physical health difficulties.
5. The data presented in Table 5 demonstrate significant variations in the application of teaching strategies based on teachers' profile variables. Notably, sex was found to significantly affect the use of all six teaching strategies, indicating that male and female teachers tend to apply different instructional approaches, possibly due to varying teaching styles and instructional preferences. In contrast, age was not a significant factor in any of the strategies, suggesting that both younger and older teachers apply these methods similarly. However, teaching experience emerged as a significant factor across all strategies—differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, task simplification, adaptation, visual and verbal cues, positive reinforcement, and motivation techniques—highlighting that more experienced educators are more likely to implement these inclusive practices effectively. These findings suggest that while gender may influence teaching style, it is experience and professional development that most strongly affect how inclusive strategies are utilized. Teachers with more years in the field likely possess greater exposure to diverse learners and are better equipped to tailor their methods accordingly.

Thus, ongoing training and reflective teaching practices are essential for improving inclusive education and supporting learners with physical health challenges.

6. The findings from the Pearson correlation analysis reveal a strong and statistically significant relationship between the use of inclusive teaching strategies and the participation levels of learners with physical health conditions. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.82$) indicates a strong positive association, while the p-value (0.00), being lower than the standard alpha level of 0.05, confirms that this relationship is not due to chance. The analysis shows that the mean level of teaching strategy utilization is 3.42 with a standard deviation of 1.11, while the mean level of learner participation is 3.21 with a standard deviation of 1.12. These findings highlight that as teachers increase their use of specific strategies—such as differentiated instruction, positive reinforcement, cooperative learning, task simplification, and the use of visual and verbal cues—student participation among learners with physical health difficulties significantly improves. This strong correlation underscores the essential role of adaptive teaching methods in creating inclusive classrooms that support the diverse needs of all learners. It suggests that when educators consistently apply these strategies, barriers to participation are reduced, fostering greater inclusiveness in physical education settings. Furthermore, the statistical significance of the p-value (0.00) emphasizes the urgency for targeted teacher training, professional development, and the provision of adequate instructional materials and resources. Ultimately, the data affirms that intentional and inclusive pedagogical approaches can positively influence the engagement and active participation of students with physical impairments, reinforcing the need for continuous support and development in this area.
7. The researcher proposed a Quality Physical Education Improvement Plan based on the study's findings, targeting key areas of concern to enhance inclusivity and engagement for learners with physical disabilities. The plan begins with a Needs Assessment and Baseline Survey, utilizing mixed methods such as surveys, interviews, and classroom observations to identify current challenges and learning gaps. This data-driven approach enables educational stakeholders to design more inclusive strategies. Following this, Professional Development and Training are prioritized to equip PE teachers with the necessary skills and tools to support diverse learners. These workshops focus on inclusive teaching practices and instructional modifications, promoting greater learner engagement. The plan also includes Curriculum Adaptation and Inclusive Instruction, which involves revising PE curricula to integrate adaptive activities and personalized learning paths that meet the varied needs of students with physical impairments. Research supports that such adaptations significantly improve participation. Lastly, Adaptive Equipment and Facility Enhancements are proposed to ensure a safe and accessible learning environment. Upgrading sports equipment and modifying facilities allows all students to participate in PE activities with confidence and safety, reinforcing inclusivity through physical accessibility improvements.

Conclusion and Recommendation

1. The demographic profile of the teacher-respondents reveals a predominantly young and female workforce, with most teachers aged 30-34 and female educators outnumbering their male counterparts in teaching learners with physical health challenges. The majority have 1-10 years of teaching experience, with no respondents exceeding 40 years. Additionally, participation in professional development is moderate, as most have attended 1-5 training sessions. These findings suggest that while the teaching force possesses the foundational experience, further training and professional development could enhance their capacity to support learners with physical health challenges.
2. Learners with physical health challenges demonstrate high participation in physical activities when provided with essential resources and a supportive environment. The availability of sports materials and accessible facilities significantly influences engagement. Socio-cultural and environmental factors further highlighted the importance of inclusive school communities, positive peer and teacher attitudes,

and adaptive infrastructure. The active participation in Physical Education and sports confirmed the strong motivation and encouragement provided to the learners. These outcomes confirmed the strong need to maintain adequate investment in providing well-equipped facilities, accessible school settings, and ongoing support from teachers and peers to maximize participation.

3. Teachers apply a broad array of teaching methods to assist learners with physical limitations, and differentiated instruction is implemented effectively by framing content with different perspectives. Cooperative learning is equally prevalent, which fosters healthy intergroup relations and enhances proper role allocation within the group. These instruction methods and the adaptation of tasks enable positioning by changing classroom activities and how tasks are completed. Other forms of modification include encouraging and motivational techniques that foster participation. While these strategies are effectively applied in overcoming other resource provisions for cooperative learning, the refinement of individualized motivational strategy remains.
4. The results suggest that the degree of engagement involving learners with physical health problems depends differently on age, teaching experience years, and the training sessions attended by the teachers, emphasizing the impact of professional development on levels of inclusive participation within the curriculum. Yet, most strikingly, no significant difference was made based on sex, meaning gender does not affect ascribed levels of engagement.
5. The scope of educational techniques varies significantly according to teacher gender and teaching experience. Teachers of different sexes utilize teaching strategies in other ways, while older and more experienced teachers Robert Smith—The Soroko PhD. IOE—PE. They tend to deploy methods that are more varied and adaptive; they use more methods in their teaching. Age, however, does not have a considerable effect on strategy use.
6. A robust positive relation exists between the degree of strategy use and learners' engagement with physical health conditions. This shows how important implementing teaching strategies is to students' engagement in PE physical education lessons.
7. The Quality Physical Education Improvement Plan aims to increase pupils' participation in PE lessons regarding their physical health difficulties. It seeks to overcome the relevant teaching barriers that have evidenced low participation levels by altering teaching strategies to be more appropriately placed within the PE lesson delivery paradigm.

Recommendation

1. Higher learning institutions should prepare grade-specific teaching strategies for physical education tailored to students with diverse needs.
2. Empower administrators with budgetary discretion to procure and maintain fully accessible sporting facilities, specialized equipment, and an optimal environment for all learners to promote healthy participation in physical activities.
3. Encourage faculty and staff to apply active learning strategies through progressive engagement of learners with physical health challenges.
4. Foster employable skills through tailored workshops in inclusive physical education training with a focus on novice and less experienced teacher educators.
5. Encourage organized forums where experienced physical educators will be invited to share effective practices with newer teachers to promote adoption of successful teaching methods.
6. Engage educators in non-lectured courses to reduce passive attendance in primary, middle, and high school-level physical education classes.
7. Supervision of the primary document stipulating enhancement design, instructions on the use, training, resource distribution, influence assessment, and multiplier assessment to ascertain maintained and adaptable participation impact is essential

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