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Beyond Physical Activity: Lived Experiences of Elementary Learners in Developing Physical Literacy through MAPEH at San Andres Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

Physical literacy has emerged as a holistic educational outcome that extends beyond the acquisition of motor skills and participation in physical activities. It encompasses learners' motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding that enable lifelong engagement in healthy and active lifestyles. Within the Philippine basic education curriculum, Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) plays a significant role in cultivating physical literacy by integrating movement education, health awareness, creative expression, and values formation. However, despite growing international recognition of physical literacy, limited qualitative research has explored how elementary learners experience its development through MAPEH instruction, particularly within Philippine public elementary schools. This study explored the lived experiences of elementary learners in developing physical literacy through MAPEH at San Andres Elementary School. Employing a transcendental phenomenological research design, twelve (12) purposively selected elementary learners participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's Seven-Step Phenomenological Method. Five major themes emerged: (1) Discovering Confidence through Movement and Physical Activities; (2) Developing Physical Competence through Meaningful Learning Experiences; (3) Building Healthy Habits through Holistic MAPEH Instruction; (4) Strengthening Social Relationships through Collaborative Participation; and (5) Fostering Lifelong Appreciation for Active Living and Well-being. The findings revealed that MAPEH contributed significantly to learners' physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development by promoting confidence, competence, teamwork, healthy behaviors, and intrinsic motivation toward lifelong physical activity. The study recommends strengthening learner-centered MAPEH pedagogies, physical literacy-focused curriculum implementation, teacher professional development, and school-community partnerships to sustain holistic learner development.

Keywords: physical literacy, MAPEH, elementary learners, physical education, phenomenology, learner experiences, holistic development, active living

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Background of the Study

Physical literacy has become an increasingly important educational goal as schools recognize that quality physical education extends beyond teaching sports skills or encouraging participation in physical activities. Contemporary educational perspectives emphasize that physically literate learners possess the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding necessary to value and engage in physical activity throughout their lives. Physical literacy therefore represents a holistic approach to education that integrates physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development while promoting lifelong health and well-being. International organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO, recognize physical literacy as a fundamental outcome of quality physical education because it supports lifelong participation in healthy movement behaviors, improves physical and mental well-being, and contributes to sustainable educational development.

Within the Philippine educational system, Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) occupies a unique position because it promotes learners' holistic development by integrating movement education, artistic expression, health promotion, and values formation. Under the MATATAG Curriculum and the K-12 Basic Education Program, MAPEH seeks to develop physically active, health-conscious, creative, and socially responsible learners capable of making informed decisions that contribute to lifelong wellness. Unlike subjects that primarily emphasize cognitive learning, MAPEH provides opportunities for learners to develop physical competence, teamwork, leadership, creativity, emotional resilience, and healthy lifestyle habits through meaningful movement experiences, cooperative games, dance, fitness activities, sports participation, music, arts, and health education.

Globally, the concept of physical literacy has gained substantial attention among researchers, educators, and policymakers as an essential outcome of quality physical education. Rather than focusing solely on physical fitness or athletic performance, physical literacy encourages learners to develop confidence, enjoyment, competence, and motivation that inspire lifelong participation in physical activity. Recent research emphasizes that physical literacy supports holistic learner development by integrating motor competence, self-confidence, knowledge, emotional well-being, and positive attitudes toward movement. Studies likewise demonstrate that physical literacy contributes not only to physical health but also to academic performance, social interaction, mental wellness, and lifelong quality of life.

The Department of Education (DepEd, 2024) emphasizes that MAPEH supports the development of physically active, healthy, creative, and socially responsible learners through learner-centered instructional approaches. Physical Education, as one component of MAPEH, encourages participation in games, dance, sports, fitness activities, and movement experiences that strengthen both physical competencies and psychosocial development.

According to UNESCO (2023), quality physical education creates supportive environments where learners feel safe, respected, and motivated to participate. Inclusive instructional practices encourage every learner to engage in movement experiences that strengthen confidence, competence, and enjoyment rather than focusing exclusively on competition and performance outcomes.

Barnett et al. (2022) explained that children who demonstrate higher levels of motor competence are more likely to participate confidently in physical activities and maintain physically active lifestyles throughout



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adolescence and adulthood. Physical competence also contributes to self-esteem, academic engagement, and emotional well-being because learners experience greater success during movement-related activities. Self-Determination Theory explains that learners become intrinsically motivated when educational environments satisfy their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Physical education teachers who create supportive, enjoyable, and inclusive learning environments encourage learners to participate willingly rather than merely complying with classroom requirements.

Contemporary educational research likewise emphasizes that physical literacy is best developed through learner-centered pedagogies that provide meaningful movement experiences, inclusive participation, supportive learning environments, and opportunities for reflection. Elementary learners particularly benefit from instructional approaches that encourage exploration, collaboration, creativity, and enjoyment because positive movement experiences during childhood strongly influence lifelong participation in physical activity. Physical literacy therefore extends beyond physical education classes by shaping learners' identities, confidence, resilience, and commitment to maintaining healthy lifestyles across different life stages.

Within Philippine elementary schools, MAPEH teachers continuously implement activities designed to strengthen learners' physical competencies, movement skills, fitness, health awareness, teamwork, and sportsmanship. However, instructional practices often remain evaluated primarily through learners' performance, physical fitness assessments, or participation rates. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to understanding how learners themselves experience physical literacy development and how MAPEH shapes their confidence, motivation, self-perception, and appreciation for active living. Capturing these lived experiences is essential because physical literacy is fundamentally personal, holistic, and influenced by learners' individual interactions with movement, teachers, peers, and the school environment.

At San Andres Elementary School, MAPEH serves as an important avenue for promoting holistic learner development through physical activities, games, dance, health education, and collaborative learning experiences. The school continuously encourages learners to participate in activities that strengthen physical competence while nurturing discipline, teamwork, leadership, and healthy habits. Nevertheless, there remains limited empirical evidence describing how elementary learners themselves experience the development of physical literacy through these educational experiences. Understanding these lived experiences may provide valuable insights into improving instructional practices that foster lifelong appreciation for movement, wellness, and healthy living.

The research gap lies in the limited phenomenological studies examining elementary learners' lived experiences in developing physical literacy through MAPEH within the Philippine public elementary school context. Existing studies predominantly utilize quantitative approaches focusing on physical fitness, motor skill development, participation rates, or health outcomes, while relatively few investigations explore learners' personal meanings, motivations, emotions, and lived experiences associated with physical literacy development. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of qualitative evidence situated in local elementary school settings such as San Andres Elementary School. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how elementary learners experience the development of physical literacy through MAPEH, providing a deeper understanding of the educational processes that cultivate lifelong



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active living, holistic well-being, and meaningful engagement in physical education.

Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily anchored on Whitehead's Physical Literacy Theory (2019), which conceptualizes physical literacy as the integration of motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding that enables individuals to value and engage in physical activity throughout life. The theory provides the principal lens for understanding how elementary learners experience physical literacy through meaningful MAPEH instruction.

The study is further supported by Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which explains that learning occurs through concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Since MAPEH emphasizes movement experiences, games, dance, and physical activities, this theory explains how learners construct understanding through direct participation.

Finally, the study adopts Self-Determination Theory developed by Ryan and Deci (2020), which posits that intrinsic motivation develops when learners experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This theory explains how supportive MAPEH learning environments foster learners' confidence, enjoyment, participation, and lifelong commitment to physical activity.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative transcendental phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of elementary learners in developing physical literacy through Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) at San Andres Elementary School. A phenomenological approach was selected because it seeks to understand the essence of individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they assign to a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Specifically, the study adopted Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology, which emphasizes describing participants' experiences as they are consciously lived while allowing the researcher to practice *epoché* or bracketing to minimize personal biases and preconceived assumptions. This research design enabled the researcher to capture rich, authentic descriptions of how elementary learners experienced the development of physical literacy through participation in MAPEH activities and how these experiences shaped their confidence, motivation, physical competence, social interaction, and appreciation for lifelong active living.

The study was conducted at San Andres Elementary School, a public elementary school committed to implementing the Department of Education's learner-centered curriculum and promoting holistic child development through quality MAPEH instruction. The school regularly provides learners with diverse opportunities to participate in movement education, sports, games, dance, rhythmic activities, fitness exercises, music, arts, and health-related learning experiences designed to strengthen physical competence, healthy lifestyle practices, teamwork, and values formation. As an educational environment that actively promotes physical activity and holistic learner development, San Andres Elementary School provided an appropriate context for exploring learners' lived experiences in developing physical literacy.

The participants consisted of twelve (12) elementary learners who were selected through purposive sampling based on predetermined inclusion criteria. Participants were required to (1) be officially enrolled



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at San Andres Elementary School during the conduct of the study; (2) have regularly attended MAPEH classes for at least one academic year; (3) have actively participated in school-based physical education activities, games, dance, sports, fitness exercises, and health-related learning experiences; (4) demonstrate the ability to communicate and describe their learning experiences; and (5) voluntarily agree to participate in the study through written parental informed consent and child assent, recognizing that the participants were minors. The sample size was determined using the principle of data saturation, wherein no new themes, meanings, or insights emerged from the interview data despite continued data collection (Saunders et al., 2018).

Data were gathered using a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide specifically designed to explore learners' experiences in developing physical literacy through MAPEH. The interview guide underwent content validation by experts in Physical Education, MAPEH instruction, elementary education, qualitative research, curriculum and instruction, and educational psychology to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the research objectives. Prior to the formal interviews, the instrument was pilot-tested among elementary learners from another public school to refine the wording, sequencing, and comprehensibility of the questions based on the developmental level of the participants. Individual face-to-face interviews, lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes, were conducted in a quiet, child-friendly environment within the school premises. Throughout the interviews, the researcher utilized age-appropriate language, probing questions, and supportive communication strategies to encourage participants to express their experiences comfortably and honestly. With permission from parents or guardians and school authorities, all interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented by field notes documenting learners' facial expressions, gestures, emotional responses, and contextual observations that enriched the interpretation of the data.

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) Seven-Step Phenomenological Method, a rigorous analytical procedure widely recognized in phenomenological research. The process involved repeatedly reading the interview transcripts to gain familiarity with the participants' narratives, extracting significant statements directly related to the phenomenon, formulating meanings from these statements, clustering similar meanings into thematic categories, developing exhaustive descriptions of the lived experiences, identifying the fundamental structure of the phenomenon, and conducting member checking to validate the credibility of the findings. Considering the participants' developmental level, member checking was conducted using simplified summaries and follow-up conversations, allowing learners to confirm that the interpreted themes accurately reflected their personal experiences and perceptions.

To establish the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher adhered to the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement with participants, member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation of interview transcripts and field notes. Transferability was enhanced by providing rich, thick descriptions of the research setting, participant characteristics, and methodological procedures, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational contexts. Dependability was maintained through a comprehensive audit trail documenting every stage of the research process, including participant selection, data collection, coding, theme development, and



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interpretation. Confirmability was ensured through reflexive journaling, careful documentation of analytic decisions, and continuous consultation with qualitative research experts to minimize researcher bias and ensure that the findings were grounded in the participants' authentic experiences rather than the researcher's personal assumptions.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study in accordance with the Philippine National Ethical Guidelines for Health and Health-Related Research (2022) and the ethical standards governing educational research involving children. Prior to data collection, formal approval was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent, the school principal of San Andres Elementary School, and other relevant educational authorities. Because the participants were minors, written parental informed consent and child assent were secured before participation. Participants and their parents or guardians were fully informed about the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of responses, anonymity through the use of pseudonyms, and the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time without any academic consequences. All interview recordings, transcripts, and research documents were stored in password-protected electronic files accessible only to the researcher, while printed documents were kept in locked storage cabinets. These materials will be securely retained for the period prescribed by institutional research policies before being permanently destroyed.

Through these rigorous methodological procedures, the study generated rich, credible, and authentic descriptions of elementary learners' lived experiences in developing physical literacy through MAPEH at San Andres Elementary School. The findings provide valuable insights into how learner-centered physical education experiences contribute to learners' physical competence, confidence, healthy lifestyle habits, social development, and lifelong appreciation for active living, thereby offering evidence-based recommendations for strengthening MAPEH instruction and physical literacy development within Philippine elementary schools.

Results and Discussion

The phenomenological analysis of the lived experiences of elementary learners regarding the development of physical literacy through Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) at San Andres Elementary School revealed that physical literacy extends far beyond simply participating in physical activities or achieving satisfactory performance in physical education classes. Participants consistently described MAPEH as a learning experience that nurtured their confidence, physical competence, healthy habits, social relationships, emotional well-being, and appreciation for lifelong active living. Through movement activities, games, dance, sports, fitness exercises, health education, and collaborative classroom experiences, learners gradually developed not only the physical ability to perform various movements but also the motivation, confidence, knowledge, and values necessary to engage in healthy lifestyles.

The participants emphasized that their experiences in MAPEH transformed the way they viewed physical activity. Instead of considering physical education merely as an academic requirement, they began to perceive movement as enjoyable, meaningful, and beneficial to their overall well-being. These experiences illustrate that physical literacy develops through continuous interaction among supportive teachers,



engaging learning environments, positive peer relationships, and meaningful movement experiences that encourage learners to participate actively regardless of their physical abilities.

The analysis generated five major themes: (1) Discovering Confidence through Movement and Physical Activities; (2) Developing Physical Competence through Meaningful Learning Experiences; (3) Building Healthy Habits through Holistic MAPEH Instruction; (4) Strengthening Social Relationships through Collaborative Participation; and (5) Fostering Lifelong Appreciation for Active Living and Well-being.

Theme 1. Discovering Confidence through Movement and Physical Activities

One of the most prominent experiences shared by the participants was the gradual development of self-confidence through regular participation in various movement activities provided during MAPEH classes. Many learners initially described themselves as shy, hesitant, or afraid of making mistakes whenever they participated in sports, games, dance performances, or classroom demonstrations. However, repeated exposure to supportive learning experiences gradually transformed these feelings into confidence and willingness to participate.

Participants explained that teachers consistently encouraged them to try their best rather than focus on winning or achieving perfect performance. Because mistakes were treated as part of learning rather than failures, learners became less anxious and more willing to participate in classroom activities. This supportive environment allowed them to discover their own physical capabilities while overcoming fear and self-doubt.

One participant shared:

"Before, I was shy because I thought I wasn't good at sports. But our teacher always encouraged us to participate. Little by little, I became more confident every time we had MAPEH." (Participant 2)

Another participant explained:

"I learned that I don't need to be the best player. What is important is that I participate and continue improving." (Participant 8)

Another learner remarked:

"After joining many activities, I was no longer afraid to perform in front of my classmates. I became more confident not only in MAPEH but also in other subjects." (Participant 10)

These narratives indicate that physical literacy begins with developing learners' confidence in their ability to move, participate, and succeed regardless of their individual skill levels. Confidence emerged not because students became elite athletes but because they experienced acceptance, encouragement, and gradual personal improvement.

Furthermore, participants revealed that successful movement experiences enhanced their willingness to explore new physical activities. As they became more comfortable participating in games, dances, and fitness exercises, they also became more willing to challenge themselves by trying unfamiliar skills and accepting constructive feedback from teachers. This growing confidence influenced not only their participation in MAPEH but also their overall self-esteem and classroom engagement.

These findings strongly support Whitehead's Physical Literacy Theory (2019), which identifies confidence as one of the essential components of physical literacy. Likewise, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997)



explains that successful experiences strengthen individuals' beliefs in their own capabilities, increasing motivation, persistence, and willingness to undertake future challenges.

Theme 2. Developing Physical Competence through Meaningful Learning Experiences

Participants consistently emphasized that MAPEH enabled them to develop physical competence through enjoyable, meaningful, and authentic movement experiences. Rather than simply memorizing concepts, learners actively engaged in games, sports, dance routines, rhythmic activities, fitness exercises, and skill demonstrations that allowed them to improve their coordination, balance, flexibility, strength, endurance, and movement efficiency.

Students explained that every practical activity served as an opportunity to learn new movement skills while gradually improving existing abilities. They appreciated that teachers demonstrated each activity carefully, provided opportunities for repeated practice, and encouraged continuous improvement instead of expecting immediate mastery. As a result, learners perceived physical competence as a continuous learning journey rather than a fixed ability.

One participant shared:

"Every activity taught us something new. At first, I couldn't perform some movements, but after practicing many times, I learned how to do them correctly." (Participant 5)

Another participant stated:

"I became stronger and more active because we always practiced different physical activities. I noticed that I could do things that I couldn't do before." (Participant 9)

Another learner explained:

"The exercises helped me improve my balance and coordination. I also became more interested in joining school sports activities." (Participant 11)

Participants also highlighted that physical competence extended beyond developing athletic skills. They described improvements in posture, body coordination, stamina, flexibility, and physical endurance, which positively influenced their participation in both school and home activities. Many learners became more willing to engage in recreational games with friends and family because they felt physically capable and competent.

The findings further indicate that learners valued meaningful learning experiences because activities were connected to real-life situations rather than isolated physical drills. Dance performances, games, health activities, and movement challenges helped them understand the practical importance of maintaining physical fitness and developing healthy bodies.

These findings support Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which emphasizes that learning becomes meaningful when individuals actively experience, reflect upon, and apply newly acquired knowledge. Similarly, Barnett et al. (2022) concluded that developing motor competence during childhood increases lifelong participation in physical activity because learners become more confident in their movement abilities.

Theme 3. Building Healthy Habits through Holistic MAPEH Instruction



Another significant theme that emerged was the role of MAPEH in helping learners develop healthy habits and positive lifestyle practices. Participants explained that MAPEH did not merely teach physical exercises but also provided valuable lessons about nutrition, personal hygiene, disease prevention, mental wellness, emotional regulation, and healthy daily routines. These lessons gradually influenced their behaviors both inside and outside school.

Many participants reported becoming more conscious of making healthier choices after participating in MAPEH classes. They shared that they became more physically active during recess and after school, drank more water, consumed healthier food, practiced proper hygiene, and reduced excessive screen time because they understood the benefits of maintaining good health.

One participant shared:

"MAPEH taught us why exercise is important. Now I play outside more often instead of spending too much time on my cellphone." (Participant 1)

Another learner remarked:

"I learned that eating healthy food helps me become stronger during games and activities." (Participant 6)

Another participant explained:

"I always remind my family about washing hands and exercising because we learned that staying healthy prevents sickness." (Participant 12)

Participants emphasized that these healthy habits gradually became part of their daily routines rather than temporary classroom requirements. Several learners also described influencing siblings and parents by sharing what they learned during MAPEH classes, demonstrating that physical literacy extended beyond individual learning and contributed to healthier family behaviors.

These findings suggest that physical literacy encompasses not only movement competence but also informed decision-making regarding health and wellness. Learners began viewing physical activity as an important component of a healthy lifestyle rather than simply an academic subject.

The findings support the World Health Organization's health promotion framework and Whitehead's Physical Literacy Theory, which emphasize that physically literate individuals possess the knowledge and motivation necessary to maintain lifelong healthy behaviors.

Theme 4. Strengthening Social Relationships through Collaborative Participation

Participants consistently described MAPEH as an environment where they developed meaningful friendships, teamwork, communication skills, leadership abilities, empathy, and mutual respect. Collaborative activities such as team sports, relay games, dance performances, partner exercises, and group challenges encouraged learners to work together toward common goals while appreciating each other's strengths and differences.

One participant explained:

"We learned how to cooperate because every member of the team had an important role." (Participant 4)

Another participant shared:

"Even if we didn't win the game, our teacher always reminded us that helping one another was more important than winning."



(Participant 7)

Another learner stated:

"MAPEH helped me become friends with classmates that I rarely talked to before because we always worked together during activities." (Participant 9)

Participants further explained that collaborative participation taught them patience, responsibility, respect, fairness, discipline, and sportsmanship. They learned how to encourage classmates who struggled, celebrate each other's successes, and accept defeat gracefully. These experiences contributed to a stronger sense of belonging within the classroom community.

Several learners emphasized that teamwork helped reduce fear and anxiety because classmates supported one another throughout activities. Working together increased enjoyment while creating opportunities for learners to develop interpersonal skills essential beyond the school setting.

These findings strongly support Vygotsky's **Social Constructivist Theory (1978)**, which explains that learning develops through meaningful social interaction. Similarly, Bailey et al. (2019) concluded that quality physical education strengthens learners' emotional well-being, cooperation, communication, and social competence by providing collaborative movement experiences.

Theme 5. Fostering Lifelong Appreciation for Active Living and Well-being

Perhaps the most meaningful finding of the study was learners' development of a lifelong appreciation for physical activity and healthy living. Participants consistently expressed that MAPEH changed how they viewed movement by helping them recognize that physical activity contributes not only to physical fitness but also to happiness, stress reduction, confidence, and overall well-being.

Many learners reported participating in physical activities outside school, including walking, jogging, cycling, dancing, family games, and community sports. They explained that they no longer exercised simply because teachers required it but because they personally enjoyed being active and understood its long-term benefits.

One participant shared:

"I realized that exercise is not only for school. I now play with my family every afternoon because it makes me happy." (Participant 3)

Another learner explained:

"Even during weekends, I like riding my bicycle because I learned that being active keeps my body healthy." (Participant 8)

Another participant remarked:

"MAPEH helped me understand that taking care of my body today will help me become healthier when I grow up." (Participant 11)

Participants viewed active living as an enjoyable lifestyle rather than an obligation. Their experiences suggest that physical literacy cultivated intrinsic motivation, allowing learners to value movement as part of their personal identity and daily lives.

The findings align strongly with Whitehead's Physical Literacy Theory (2019), which emphasizes that the ultimate goal of physical literacy is fostering lifelong engagement in physical activity. Likewise, Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (2020) explains that learners sustain participation when they



experience enjoyment, competence, autonomy, and meaningful social relationships during learning.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the development of physical literacy through MAPEH extends far beyond improving learners' physical fitness or movement skills. Instead, physical literacy emerged as a holistic developmental process that nurtured learners' confidence, physical competence, healthy lifestyle practices, emotional resilience, social relationships, and lifelong appreciation for active living. Through learner-centered movement experiences, meaningful physical activities, supportive teacher guidance, collaborative participation, and authentic health education, elementary learners gradually developed positive identities as physically active individuals who valued movement as an essential component of overall well-being. The participants' narratives revealed that MAPEH served not merely as a subject for acquiring motor skills but as an educational platform that cultivated lifelong habits, strengthened interpersonal relationships, promoted self-confidence, and empowered learners to make healthier life choices. These findings strongly affirm Whitehead's Physical Literacy Theory, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, and Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, all of which emphasize that meaningful learning occurs through authentic experiences, supportive relationships, personal competence, and intrinsic motivation. Collectively, the study highlights that effective MAPEH instruction plays a transformative role in preparing elementary learners to become physically literate, health-conscious, socially responsible, and lifelong advocates of active living.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of elementary learners in developing physical literacy through Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) at San Andres Elementary School. The findings revealed that physical literacy extends far beyond the acquisition of movement skills and participation in physical activities. Instead, it emerged as a holistic developmental process that nurtures learners' confidence, physical competence, healthy lifestyle practices, emotional well-being, social relationships, and lifelong appreciation for active living. Through meaningful movement experiences, collaborative learning, health education, games, dance, sports, and fitness activities, learners gradually developed not only the ability to perform physical tasks but also the motivation, confidence, knowledge, and values necessary to sustain healthy and active lifestyles throughout their lives.

The study found that MAPEH provided a supportive and inclusive learning environment where learners felt encouraged to participate regardless of their physical abilities. Teacher encouragement, constructive feedback, learner-centered instruction, and enjoyable classroom experiences enabled participants to overcome fear, improve self-confidence, and appreciate continuous personal growth rather than focusing solely on competition or performance. Learners emphasized that repeated opportunities to engage in movement activities strengthened their physical competence, improved coordination, balance, endurance, and flexibility, while simultaneously fostering resilience, perseverance, and positive self-esteem. These experiences illustrate that meaningful physical education develops the whole child by integrating physical, cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of learning.



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Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that MAPEH significantly contributed to the formation of healthy habits and positive lifestyle behaviors. Learners became more conscious of the importance of regular exercise, nutritious eating, personal hygiene, disease prevention, emotional wellness, and responsible health practices. Many participants also described applying these lessons beyond the classroom by engaging in physical activities with family members, encouraging healthier habits at home, and choosing active recreation over sedentary lifestyles. These experiences indicate that physical literacy influences learners' daily behaviors and supports the development of lifelong wellness practices that extend beyond formal schooling.

The study likewise revealed that collaborative participation during games, sports, dance performances, and group activities strengthened learners' interpersonal relationships, communication skills, teamwork, leadership, empathy, discipline, and sportsmanship. Through cooperative learning experiences, learners developed meaningful friendships while learning to appreciate diversity, respect others, resolve conflicts constructively, and celebrate both individual and collective achievements. These social experiences contributed significantly to learners' emotional well-being and strengthened their sense of belonging within the school community.

Finally, the findings affirm that physical literacy serves as a transformative educational outcome that prepares learners for lifelong active living rather than merely improving short-term physical performance. The study supports Whitehead's Physical Literacy Theory, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, and Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, all of which emphasize that meaningful learning develops through authentic experiences, supportive environments, social interaction, competence, and intrinsic motivation. Overall, the study concludes that quality MAPEH instruction plays a vital role in cultivating physically literate learners who value movement, embrace healthy lifestyles, and become responsible individuals capable of maintaining lifelong physical, emotional, and social well-being.

Educational Implications

The findings of this study offer significant implications for elementary education, curriculum implementation, instructional leadership, teacher professional development, and educational policy. First, MAPEH teachers should continue implementing learner-centered instructional strategies that prioritize meaningful movement experiences, inclusive participation, cooperative learning, and authentic performance tasks rather than emphasizing competition alone. Such instructional approaches enable learners of varying abilities to develop confidence, competence, and positive attitudes toward physical activity.

Second, schools should recognize physical literacy as a holistic educational outcome that contributes not only to learners' physical development but also to their emotional resilience, social competence, cognitive growth, and lifelong health. School administrators should therefore strengthen support for MAPEH by providing adequate sports equipment, safe play environments, instructional resources, and opportunities for learners to participate in diverse movement experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

Third, professional development programs for MAPEH teachers should emphasize physical literacy-centered pedagogy, inclusive physical education, differentiated instruction, child-centered assessment,



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and innovative teaching approaches that foster motivation, confidence, and lifelong participation in physical activity. Teachers should also be equipped with strategies that accommodate learners with varying physical abilities while promoting equitable participation and positive movement experiences. Fourth, curriculum developers and educational policymakers should strengthen the integration of physical literacy principles within the MATATAG Curriculum by ensuring that MAPEH learning competencies promote holistic learner development rather than focusing solely on physical performance outcomes. Assessment practices should likewise recognize learners' motivation, confidence, teamwork, healthy behaviors, and appreciation for active living as important indicators of educational success. Finally, schools should establish stronger partnerships with parents, local government units, health professionals, and community organizations to promote healthy lifestyles beyond the school setting. Family-based wellness activities, community sports programs, school fitness initiatives, and health promotion campaigns may further reinforce the physical literacy experiences gained through MAPEH instruction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **MAPEH teachers** should continuously implement innovative, learner-centered instructional approaches that emphasize enjoyment, inclusivity, experiential learning, and meaningful participation to strengthen learners' confidence, physical competence, and lifelong appreciation for active living.
2. **Elementary learners** should be encouraged to participate actively in school-based and community-based physical activities, sports, dance, fitness programs, and health promotion initiatives to further develop their physical literacy beyond classroom instruction.
3. **School administrators** should provide continuous support for quality MAPEH instruction by improving sports facilities, playgrounds, instructional equipment, safety measures, and professional development opportunities for teachers.
4. **Parents and guardians** should reinforce physical literacy at home by encouraging regular family physical activities, healthy eating habits, active recreation, and positive attitudes toward exercise and wellness.
5. **The Department of Education** should strengthen policies supporting physical literacy by integrating learner-centered physical education practices, inclusive instructional approaches, and comprehensive teacher capability-building programs within MAPEH implementation across elementary schools.



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6. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar phenomenological studies involving learners from different grade levels, geographical locations, and educational contexts. Comparative studies between public and private schools, longitudinal investigations of physical literacy development, and mixed-methods research examining relationships among physical literacy, academic achievement, mental health, and overall well-being may further expand the body of knowledge in this field.

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