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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Intents and Actualities of Health Optimizing Physical Education (HOPE) Curriculum Implementation: A Sequential Exploratory

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Abstract

This study explores the implementation of the Health Optimizing Physical Education (HOPE) curriculum in senior high schools in Pasay City, Philippines. Utilizing an exploratory sequential mixed-method design, the research first employed validated questionnaires to quantitatively assess the implementation of HOPE 1, 2, 3, and 4. Subsequently, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with teachers provided qualitative insights into the challenges and experiences during the curriculum's initial three years. The study involved 428 private school students, 412 public school students, 27 private school teachers, and 38 public school teachers. Quantitative findings indicated a moderate to limited extent of curriculum implementation, with significant differences between public and private schools for HOPE 1 and 2, but not for HOPE 3 and 4. Qualitative data highlighted challenges related to curriculum content, facilities, equipment, and teacher training. Recommendations include targeted workshops, Learning Action Cell sessions, collaboration with community resources, and initiatives like the Family Activity Challenge. These interventions aim to enhance the curriculum's effectiveness, promoting physical activity and health literacy among students.

Keywords
Health Optimizing, Physical Education, Health Promotion, Physical Activity, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of education and health promotion, there is a growing recognition of the pivotal role played by physical education programs in fostering holistic student development. Research indicates that students who engage in regular physical activity not only exhibit better physical fitness but also demonstrate improved academic performance and enhanced mental well-being. Physical education is crucial in promoting lifelong health, with physically active individuals experiencing reduced risks of chronic diseases such as obesity and cardiovascular disorders (Mather, 2023). Within the context of the Philippine education system, the implementation of the Health-Optimizing Physical Education (HOPE) curriculum holds significant promise.

Unlike traditional physical education programs, which often focus solely on physical fitness, the HOPE curriculum integrates evidence-based strategies that promote comprehensive health and well-being. This approach is particularly timely as it addresses the dual challenge of rising non-communicable diseases and the need for holistic education among Filipino youth. Despite these intentions, the effective implementation of the HOPE curriculum faces multifaceted challenges, ranging from resource constraints to varying levels of teacher preparedness and institutional support (Department of Education, 2020). The primary objective of this research is to explore the intents

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and actualities surrounding the implementation of the HOPE curriculum in senior high schools across Pasay City, Philippines. Specifically, it aims to identify the key factors influencing the successful integration of health-promoting strategies within the existing physical education framework. Through a sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach, this study seeks to uncover the lived experiences of teachers and students regarding the HOPE curriculum's implementation. By employing both qualitative data from focus group discussions and quantitative data from validated questionnaires, this research intends to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in enhancing health outcomes through physical education in Pasay City schools (Bezeau et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this study seeks to contribute to the broader educational discourse by offering empirical insights into the efficacy of HOPE curriculum implementation strategies. By identifying gaps and successes in current practices, this research aims to inform policy recommendations and educational reforms aimed at optimizing student health outcomes through evidence-based physical education interventions.

The rationale for conducting this study lies in its potential to inform evidence-based practices that can significantly impact the health and educational outcomes of students in Pasay City. By elucidating the factors that influence the implementation of the HOPE curriculum, this research not only aims to benefit educational institutions and policymakers but also holds personal significance for the author as a catalyst for positive change in educational practices and student well-being (Rudhumbu, 2021).

This study is guided by several key research questions: What are the intents of the HOPE curriculum? What are the actualities in the implementation of the HOPE curriculum as perceived by students and teachers in public schools in terms of Exercise for Fitness (HOPE 1), Sports (HOPE 2), Dance (HOPE 3), and Recreational Activities (HOPE 4)? Additionally, it seeks to understand the actualities in the implementation of the HOPE curriculum as perceived by students and teachers in private schools in terms of Exercise for Fitness (HOPE 1), Sports (HOPE 2), Dance (HOPE 3), and Recreational Activities (HOPE 4). The study also aims to determine if there is a significant difference in the actualities in the implementation of the HOPE curriculum between public and private schools as perceived by students and teachers in the same categories. Furthermore, based on the challenges experienced by HOPE teachers, the research seeks to recommend solutions to address their training needs in terms of curriculum content, facilities and equipment, instructional materials, and mode of delivery (pedagogical approaches). Finally, based on the study's findings, the research aims to recommend strategies to enhance the program and capacitate the teachers to achieve the goals and objectives of the HOPE curriculum. By addressing these research questions, the study aims to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the HOPE curriculum's implementation, its challenges, and potential areas for improvement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs an exploratory sequential mixed-method design, beginning with a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase to comprehensively evaluate the implementation of the Health Optimizing Physical Education (HOPE) curriculum in Pasay City's senior high schools. The initial quantitative phase utilizes a researcher-made questionnaire, validated by field experts and aligned with the Department of Education's Senior High School HOPE curriculum guide. This phase aims to quantitatively assess the implementation of HOPE 1, 2, 3, and 4, identifying key strengths and weaknesses in curriculum delivery and teaching efficacy.

Following the quantitative assessment, a qualitative phase is conducted to delve deeper into the contextual factors influencing curriculum implementation. This phase involves Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with randomly selected teachers, exploring their experiences and challenges during the initial three years of HOPE curriculum implementation. This mixed-method approach enables a thorough examination by first capturing quantitative data on curriculum implementation metrics and then gaining qualitative insights into educators' perspectives and experiences.

The study includes a diverse participant pool, comprising 428 private school students, 412 public school students, 27 private school teachers, and 38 public school teachers from Pasay City. This broad sample ensures the inclusion of varied institutional contexts, providing a robust dataset for analyzing the implementation of health-optimizing physical

education. The quantitative data are collected using validated questionnaires, while the qualitative data are gathered through open-ended interviews and FGDs with HOPE teachers.

Ethical considerations are meticulously addressed in this study. Permissions were obtained from the Department of Education Division of City Schools, Pasay, and private senior high schools. Written consent forms were provided to all participants, ensuring their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, informed consent was secured from the parents of participants under 17 years old. For teachers involved in the focus group discussions, both written and verbal consent were obtained. The ethical protocol ensures the protection of participants' rights and the integrity of the research process.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses, including Weighted Mean, T-test for comparing responses from public and private school teachers, and Z-test for students' responses, are employed to rigorously evaluate curriculum implementation effectiveness. These analyses aim to identify trends, disparities, and areas for improvement in physical education practices across different educational settings within Pasay City.

RESULTS

This section contains reported data collected in terms of the following research questions:

1. What are the intents of the HOPE curriculum?
2. What are the actualities in the implementation of the HOPE curriculum as perceived by students and teachers in public and private schools?
3. Is there a significant difference in the actualities of the implementation of public and private schools as perceived by students and teachers?
4. Based on the challenges experienced by the HOPE teachers, what may be recommended to address their training needs in terms of curriculum content, facilities and equipment, instructional materials, and pedagogical approaches?
5. Based on the study's findings, what may be recommended to enhance the program and capacitate the teachers to achieve the goals and objectives of the HOPE curriculum?

The discussion of the results and their interpretation are presented according to the problems of the study.

The Intents of the HOPE Curriculum

Based on the HOPE Curriculum Guide (DepEd, 2019), the following intents are explicitly stated: Physical Education and Health offers experiential learning for learners to adopt an active life for fitness and lifelong health. The knowledge, skills, and understanding, which include physical and health literacy competencies, support them in accessing, synthesizing, and evaluating information; making informed decisions; and enhancing and advocating their own as well as others' fitness and health.

HOPE 1

Exercise for Fitness. This course intends to enable the learner to set goals, monitor one's participation in aerobic and muscle- and bone-strengthening activities, and constantly evaluate how well one has integrated this into one's lifestyle. It consists of an array of offerings which learners can choose from (Bharathiraja, 2018).

HOPE 2

Individual, Dual, and Team Sports in Competitive and Recreational Settings. The course consists of an array of offerings which learners can choose from. Demonstrates understanding of sports in optimizing one's health as a habit, as requisite for physical activity assessment performance, and as a career opportunity. The learner, leads sports events with proficiency and confidence resulting in independent pursuit and influencing others positively (Pharr et al., 2019).

HOPE 3

Dance. This course on dance includes rhythmical movement patterns, the promotion and appreciation of Philippine folk dance, indigenous and traditional dances as well as other dance forms. It consists of an array of offerings which learners can choose from. The students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of dance in optimizing one's health, as requisite for physical activity assessment performance, and as a career opportunity. As such, the students should be able to lead dance events with proficiency and confidence resulting in independent pursuit and influencing others positively (Lobo, 2022).

HOPE 4

Recreational Activities. The course on recreational activities is associated with outdoor, natural, or semi-natural settings; it enables learners to move safely and competently in these settings while making a positive relationship with natural environments and promoting their sustainable use.

It consists of an array of offerings which learners can choose from. Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of recreation in optimizing one's health as a habit, as a requisite for physical activity assessment performance, and as a career opportunity. They should also be able to lead recreational events with proficiency and confidence resulting in independent pursuit and influencing others positively (Aquino, 2023).

The actualities in the implementation of the HOPE curriculum as perceived by students and teachers in public schools

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the extent of implementation of the HOPE curriculum. The general evaluation of teachers and students from both private and public-school institutions indicates that the curriculum has been implemented to a moderate to limited extent. This is reflected in the differences in evaluation ratings between private and public-school institutions, which are further discussed below.

The average distributions of ratings across respondents are as follows: Great Extent 28.05%, High Extent 24.93%, Moderate Extent 19.59%, and Limited Extent 27.44%. This shows that the HOPE curriculum was generally implemented between High to Great Extent at 52.98%. Limitations in its implementation cannot be ignored, thus the significance of this study is to be fully mostly implemented. Creating an enhanced program recognizes factors that limit its full implementation (Lalu et al., 2013).

However, despite a Moderate to High Extent of curricular implementation, some respondents perceived certain competencies have poor implementation:

Hope 1

Display initiative, responsibility, and leadership in fitness activities; and

Organize fitness events for a target health issue or concern.

Hope 2

Differentiates types of eating (fueling for performance, emotional eating, social eating, eating while watching TV or sports events).

Observe personal safety protocol to avoid dehydration, overexertion, hypo- and hyperthermia during MVPA participation; and

Identify school and community resources in case of an injury or emergency.

Table 1. Public schools

Students in Public Schools			Teachers in Public Schools		
	Overall Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation		Overall Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
HOPE1	1.56	Limited Extent	HOPE1	3.27	High Extent
HOPE2	1.57	Limited Extent	HOPE2	2.46	Moderate Extent
HOPE3	2.37	Moderate Extent	HOPE3	2.13	Moderate Extent
HOPE4	2.38	Moderate Extent	HOPE4	2.23	Moderate Extent

Limited Extent 1-1.75, Moderate Extent-1.76-2.51, High Extent-2.52-3.27, Great Extent-3.28-4.00

Table 2. Private Schools

Students in Private Schools			Teachers in Private Schools		
	Overall Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation		Overall Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
HOPE1	2.03	Moderate Extent	HOPE1	1.81	Moderate Extent
HOPE2	2.2	Moderate Extent	HOPE2	1.87	Moderate Extent
HOPE3	2.59	High Extent	HOPE3	2.46	Moderate Extent
HOPE4	2.32	Moderate Extent	HOPE4	1.82	Moderate Extent

Limited Extent 1-1.75, Moderate Extent-1.76-2.51, High Extent-2.52-3.27, Great Extent-3.28-4.00

Significant Differences in the Actualities in The İmplementation of The HOPE Curriculum of Public and Private Schools in Terms of The Students, Teachers, and Administrators

The test of significance results show that there is a significant difference in the implementation of HOPE 1 and 2 curricula between private and public-school institutions as perceived by both teachers and students. The results can be attributed to the difference in how each respondent from both institutions (private and public) evaluated the curriculum based on their perceptions. Public-school respondents tend to rate the curriculum's extent of implementation higher than private school respondents. These tendencies are observed when comparing the evaluation of both sets of respondents per curriculum learning competencies. The difference lies only in the rate that each respondent gave upon evaluation, but the average rate is the same across learning competencies. This tendency is due to an approximation of ratings brought about by the absence of specific guidelines or rubrics in marking evaluations (Belinda et al., 2020).

Teachers' evaluation on HOPE 1 and 2 curriculum implementation generally falls towards the Great Extent level from Private Schools and Moderate Level from Public Schools across learning competencies. Those of the student evaluators differ greatly between Limited Extent for Public Schools and Great and High Extent for Private Schools (Awuonda, 2023).

The results of the evaluation on the extent of implementation of the HOPE 3 and 4 curricula between private and public school institutions, however, show no significant difference. As noted above when comparing the evaluation across competencies, the average rate is generally rated Moderate Extent. However, the distribution of ratings in HOPE 3 and 4 greatly differs between students and teachers. Private School teachers rate at a High Extent in HOPE 3 while students rate at a Moderate extent. Public School HOPE 3 teachers rate at a Moderate extent while students mostly rate at a limited extent. The same can be seen with HOPE 4 respondents. Teachers in Public Schools were mostly rated at a Moderate extent while students rated at limited extent (Solihin et al., 2023).

Private School HOPE 4 respondents generally rated at Great Extent. Factors affecting perceptions in rating between private and public, and teachers and student ratings need to be studied to give better context towards leanings in ratings.

Despite Moderate to High Extent of implementation, some perceived poor implementation of competencies:

HOPE 4

Self-assess health-related fitness (HRF) status, barriers to physical activity assessment participation, and one's diet. Set FITT goals based on training principles to achieve and/or maintain HRF. Organize events for a target health issue or concern. However, these items received a general evaluation of Moderate Extent from questionnaire responses.

Challenges Experienced By the HOPE Teachers May Be Addressed Through Capacity-Building Training

During the Focus Group Discussion, HOPE teachers highlighted various challenges encountered during the implementation of the curriculum from 2016 to the present. Concerns regarding curriculum content were expressed, with participants noting misalignment between examination content and the curriculum guide, as well as issues with the assessment process, indicating a lack of proper implementation and a mismatch between content objectives and assessment methods. Specific components of the curriculum, such as HOPE 1, 2, and 4, were reported as not being fully implemented, citing examples like the failure to organize fitness events or to conduct personal safety protocols during physical activities. The inadequacy of facilities and equipment was also a significant issue raised by participants, impacting the effective delivery of the curriculum (Ampang, 2023).

Additionally, challenges related to instructional materials, such as the need for updates and the unavailability of books, were highlighted. Concerns were also raised regarding the mode of delivery, with suggestions for non-Physical Education (P.E) specialists to undergo training and for P.E teachers to receive adequate training to enhance their pedagogical approaches. Specific instances were mentioned where teachers felt ill-equipped to teach certain topics, such as mountaineering and aquatics, due to a lack of background knowledge, suggesting a need for alternative teaching approaches. Overall, these challenges underscored the complexities involved in effectively implementing the HOPE curriculum and highlighted areas for improvement in terms of

content alignment, resource availability, and teacher training (Esmilla, 2023).

Training Activities that may be Recommended in the Crafting of Capacity Building for Teachers and to Fully Attain the Goals and Objectives of the HOPE Curriculum

The recommendations stemming from the Focus Group Discussion included a call for targeted training activities to address the identified challenges. It was suggested that teachers be equipped with strategies tailored to the needs of contemporary learners and be proficient in their assigned topics. Additionally, emphasis was placed on the importance of conducting physical fitness tests properly and ensuring access to adequate instructional materials and facilities. Collaboration with publishing companies to develop learning materials and providing proper compensation for teachers involved in crafting such materials were also proposed. To address specific challenges related to equipment and facilities, recommendations included workshops on content updates and instructional material development, as well as modifications to equipment to suit the teaching of PE 2 and PE 4. Given the practical constraints faced, such as the lack of equipment for PE 2, alternative approaches were suggested, such as engaging students in activities using items they already possess (Kela & Zulu, 2023).

Furthermore, there was a consensus on the need for government support to provide essential facilities and equipment. Specifically, for the teaching of HOPE 2 and HOPE 4, a Learning Action Cell (LAC) session focusing on best practices in teaching, improvisation of equipment or activities, and utilizing available venues or remote learning environments was recommended to enhance the teaching and learning experience. These recommendations aimed to address the identified challenges and improve the overall implementation of the HOPE curriculum (Lugtu, 2023).

DISCUSSION

Based on the research questions, the study verified the hypotheses that there exists a significant difference in the implementation of HOPE 1 and 2 curricula between private and public-school institutions, but no significant differences in HOPE 3 and 4 as perceived by both teachers and students. Using a mixed-method approach, the study utilized questionnaires followed by Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with teachers to gather data. Various studies offer insights into the implementation and impact of the HOPE program, focusing on its four components: Exercise for Fitness (HOPE 1), Sports (HOPE 2), Dance (HOPE 3), and Recreational Activities (HOPE 4). For example, (Bharathiraja, 2018) examined a health-optimizing physical education-based school physical activity program (CSPAP) aligned with the HOPE curriculum at a middle school, exploring its impact on student physical activity levels and overall health (Hasson, 2023) reviewed literature on Quality Physical Education (QPE) and HOPE, comparing the two approaches and identifying similarities and differences. Cronin & Maher (2023) conducted a qualitative study exploring teachers' experiences implementing the HOPE curriculum, examining their perspectives on the curriculum's effectiveness, challenges faced, and strategies for successful implementation. These studies provide valuable insights into the development, implementation, and effectiveness of the HOPE curriculum in promoting physical activity and overall health in schools.

The results indicated that the HOPE curriculum has been implemented to a moderate to limited extent in both public and private schools. A significant difference exists in the implementation of HOPE 1 and 2 curricula between private and public-school institutions, but no significant differences were found in the implementation of HOPE 3 and 4 curricula. Despite the overall moderate to high extent of implementation, teachers and students reported challenges, including gaps in curriculum content, instructional materials, facilities, and equipment. To address these gaps, several broad recommendations have been made.

Firstly, workshops on content updates and instructional materials development are essential to address the gaps in curriculum content and instructional materials. These workshops will ensure that teachers are informed about the latest developments in physical education and equipped with the necessary resources to deliver the curriculum effectively. Implementing, monitoring, and evaluating these workshops will ensure the goals are achieved (Esmilla, 2023). For HOPE 2 (Sports) and HOPE 4 (Recreational Activities), Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions on best practices for teaching these courses are recommended. These sessions will provide a

platform for teachers to share and learn best practices, focusing on the improvisation of equipment or activities and the use of available venues or remote learning environments. These sessions will help teachers enhance their teaching strategies and ensure more effective curriculum implementation (Kela & Zulu, 2023).

To address the inadequacy of facilities and equipment, it is recommended to establish linkages with barangay, community, and schools with public spaces for student use. This collaboration will provide students with the necessary environments to engage in physical activities, ensuring the curriculum's objectives are met (Ampang, 2023). Additionally, the Family Activity Challenge: "Outdoor Bonding with Family" is recommended. This initiative aims to promote physical activity beyond the school environment by encouraging students to participate in outdoor activities with their families and submit evidence in a portfolio. This recommendation aims to foster a culture of physical activity and health literacy within the family unit, enhancing students' engagement in physical activities and strengthening family bonds (Lugtu, 2023).

It is essential to ensure that the proposed training activities are not only implemented but also monitored and evaluated to achieve their intended goals. Continuous assessment is crucial to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to the training programs. To gain a deeper understanding of the implementation and effectiveness of the HOPE curriculum, it is recommended to conduct follow-up studies considering other variables. These studies can provide further insights into the challenges and successes of the curriculum, allowing for ongoing improvements and adaptations.

In summary, the study confirmed that the HOPE curriculum's implementation varies significantly between public and private schools for HOPE 1 and 2 but not for HOPE 3 and 4. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address the gaps in curriculum content, instructional materials, and facilities. Implementing the recommended strategies can enhance the effectiveness of the HOPE curriculum, ultimately leading to the achievement of its goals and objectives in promoting physical activity and health literacy among students. These conclusions and recommendations provide a comprehensive framework for improving the implementation of the HOPE curriculum, ensuring that it effectively contributes to the physical and health literacy of students across both public and private schools.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have declared no conflicts of interest.

Ethics Committee

This study received permission from the Ethics Commission of the State University of Malang No. 223/KEPK/2024.

Author Contributions

Study design, JMG; Data Collection, JFC; Statistical Analysis, SFF; Manuscript preparation, JMG; Literature review, SFF. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the Manuscript.

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