

SPORT EDUCATION

Filipino Teachers' Favorable Experiences in Teaching Sports Track during the Transition Years of Philippine K-12

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Abstract

The Philippine education system is undergoing a period of transition with the adoption of Republic Act 10533, generally known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act. Since the law's enactment in 2013, scholars in physical education have been researching the early impact of this change. Nonetheless, investigations on teachers' favorable stories and experiences in teaching the Senior High School's Sports Track program were woefully inadequate. As a result, this research used a qualitative phenomenology research design to elicit the favorable stories and experiences from these teachers. Participants from chosen schools in the Cotabato Province in the Philippines participated in focus groups, in-depth interviews, and extensive field observation. During the triangulation of the results, five noteworthy issues from the research participants emerged. These include having participative and kinesthetically intelligent learners, sports track competencies that correspond to the teachers' gained knowledge in college, teaching-learning that is more interactive, a curriculum that incorporates practical and hands-on activities, and an easier implementation of the curriculum. The data were used in the development of conclusions that served as

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implications for improvement of the Sports Track program's implementation in the Philippine Senior High School curriculum.

Ensuring the continued strength of the educational system in the Philippines is a key factor in promoting the country's overall development. Filipinos are encouraged to respect education as a reliable tool for speeding social progress, inspiring patriotism, and encouraging community development under the 1987 constitution of the Republic of the Philippines. These excerpts highlight the importance of education for Filipino citizens and demonstrate why education must be made available to everyone:

- “The State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development” (Section 17, Article 2).
- “The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all” (Section 1, Article 14).
- “The State recognizes the complementary roles of public and private institutions in the educational system and shall exercise reasonable supervision and regulation of all educational institutions” (Section 4, Article 14).
- “The State shall assign the highest budgetary priority to education and ensure that teaching will attract and retain its rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration and other means of job satisfaction and fulfillment” (Section 5, Article 14).

Despite the country's strong commitment to high-quality education, multiple indicators suggest Philippine education is in serious danger of declining. These indicators include students' performances on international comparative exams and an insufficient match between Filipino graduates' skills and competences and global industry needs. These signs stem from a lack of political support for fundamental changes; a weaker institutional atmosphere favorable to change; and rapid enrollment increase, resulting in overcrowded classrooms. Additionally, the emphasis of researchers is improve-

ment of the overall Philippine educational system, according to researchers (Sergio, 2012).

To address this issue fully, the legislative branch enacted Republic Act 10533, commonly known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, which intends to strengthen the country's basic education offering by improving the curriculum and adding the necessary years for basic education. As a consequence, the school curricula have been completely updated and revised to better align its aims and goals with the needs of today's students. Additionally, physical education and health have also been upgraded to better suit the interests and needs of the learners as one of the courses offered in the basic education curriculum.

Physical education teachers, in comparison to other subject teachers, face a unique set of duties for ensuring students' academic performance. They were unusual because they were responsible for facilitating a learning process in an area of knowledge that promotes physical literacy among students and focuses on their performance in a variety of physical activities. Additionally, their extensive knowledge, talents, and experiences are essential to students' performance development because they act as the major source of information students acquire and use in their jobs (Baykara & Orhan, 2020).

Physical education teachers develop professionally when they work in a supportive atmosphere that enables them to offer a stimulating environment for the learning community while maintaining an awareness of their efficiency. This conduciveness requires the provision of adequate facilities and equipment, the assignment of acceptable workloads, the maintenance of institutional support, and the maintenance of a manageable class size filled with cooperative students (Richards et al., 2017). Although these characteristics are significant, physical education teachers, particularly in the Philippine setting, continue to encounter a variety of issues and tales related to them, particularly in light of the recently implemented K-12 curriculum (Rutkowska & Zalech, 2015).

As various scholars' research works highlight, the K-12 curriculum faces many challenges and issues. According to a 2019 Development Asia poll, the Philippine educational system struggled to meet the new curriculum's requirements, citing a variety of school-based deficiencies. Due to insufficient facilities and a teacher

shortage at the Senior High School, track and strand offerings were limited. Sports Track, a senior high school program that prepares students for careers in physical education or sports-related fields (Nucum, 2018) is one of the least-provided strands in the country. Due to institutional constraints on the availability of resources for track offerings, Sports Track is only available to schools with the financial means to invest in facilities, equipment, and infrastructure, leaving students with the option of competing for slots or choosing another track (Brilliantes et al., 2019). This incompatibility between the students' abilities and the sports program jeopardizes both the instructional effectiveness and the retention rate of physical education teachers (Agboola et al., 2014).

Physical education teachers now have new stories to tell as online classes have become the new norm in schools. Due to the closure of educational institutions to strengthen the implementation of social distancing measures due to the alarming cases of the COVID-19 pandemic, discussion and communication between teachers and students occurred in virtual classrooms and social media platforms. As a result, physical education teachers began utilizing technological tools for remote instruction, despite personal concerns about the effect of digital delivery of physical education on students (Varea et al., 2022).

In light of research identifying problems and challenges related to this research topic, this study documents the favorable stories and experiences of physical education teachers teaching in Sports Track during the Philippine K–12 transition years. This research conceptualizes to fill the void left by the absence of relevant studies examining positive experiences. This research establishes a connection between the stories and the experiences that shape the overall experiences of physical education teachers when they teach their subjects. Because physical education teachers are the primary facilitators of students' learning progress, their input is valuable in decision making for the holistic enhancement of the learning environment and experience.

Method

Design and Procedures

This study used a phenomenological qualitative design to accomplish its objective. Phenomenology derives the essence of a phe-

nomenon from the firsthand experience of an individual. Because it views human experience as an authentic mode of world interpretation, it is interested in describing and evaluating participants' basic information and perceptions about their involvement in a particular scenario or occurrence. Because this design aspires to comprehend their worldview, their perspective becomes a credible source of knowledge (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015).

Additionally, qualitative research using phenomenology aims to capture participants' social realities in their natural environment. This objective is attained through the use of in-depth interviews and focused group discussions, in which data are gathered and interpreted in terms of implicit meanings.

We obtained permission letters from multiple study locations and a signed informed consent contract from research participants. Following that, interviews were scheduled at participants' convenience. We were inspired by Virgilio Enriquez's *Makapilipinong Pananaliksik* (indigenous Filipino method in research introduced in 1975). The nonaggressive Filipino approach known as *pakikipagk-wentuhan* (casual conversation) inspired this style. For analysis and interpretation, all interviews were audiotaped and verbatim transcribed.

Participants and Materials

The primary participants in this study were physical education teachers who taught in Senior High School Sports Track at selected schools in the Philippines' Cotabato Province. The difficulties they encountered provided the essential information this study intended to extract using interview guide questions. As a result, this research made use of purposive sampling. According to Creswell (2009), this sampling technique assists the researcher in collecting data by choosing suitable participants who can contribute to a complete understanding of the study and its main point.

Analysis and Interpretation

Three steps were followed in analysis of the transcribed information: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion formulation and verification.

Data reduction obtains the required information by filtering participants' replies and isolating the important and relevant concepts. The acquired data are subsequently converted into figures, tables, or conversations. Thematic analysis is a technique for classifying data and is used in the categorization of qualitative data. On the other hand, data display refers to the method in which ordered data are presented. This stage allows the flow of information from which the conclusion will be drawn. Finally, conclusions were drawn and confirmed. The conclusion picture described the major inputs identified in the study following their examination of their replies to the questions. Verification, on the other hand, strengthened the conclusion, allowing for reexamination of the evidence as many times as required until the needed confirmation was reached.

To ensure rigor and artistry in this qualitative study, we employed the Piantanida and Garman (2009) experiential-theoretic transition model was employed. The recounting of the participants' real experiences was undertaken at the start of the interpretation. Following a comprehensive discussion of the participants' experiences, iterative interpretations were offered on the basis of their remarks. Finally, ideas and studies were utilized for support of the data's interpretation. We avoided personal bias to retain the participants' real opinions and sentiments.

Results and Discussions

This section presents the participants' experiences, perspectives, and ideas as elicited during in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Table 1 lists major themes, frequency of responses, and core ideas.

Table 1

*Physical Education Teachers' Favorable Stories and Experiences
in Teaching in Philippine Senior High School Sports Track*

Major theme	Frequency of responses	Core ideas
Sports Track learners are participative, hyperactive, and kinesthetically intelligent	Variant	Students are quick learners and active participants.
	Typical	Students are eager to acquire new abilities.
	Typical	Students are receptive to new activities.
	General	Students are hyperactive.
	Variant	Students are receptive and enthused.
	Variant	Students demonstrate kinesthetic intelligence.
	Variant	Students are relatively simple to train.
Teachers gained knowledge in college corresponds with Sports Track competencies	General	Teachers applied all of the knowledge they gained during their college years.
	Typical	Teachers are assigned to a special sports program.
	General	Teachers who have completed their specialization are oriented toward a sports-specific program.
	General	Teachers put what they've learned in their degrees into practice.

Table 1 (cont.)

Major theme	Frequency of responses	Core ideas
More interactive teaching-learning	Typical	Teachers are not perfect in their field so they also learn from their students.
	Typical	Teachers are experts in their field, but they also learn from their students through interactions during school activities.
	Typical	There is interaction between students and teachers during school activities.
	Typical	Teachers take pleasure in gaining knowledge from their students.
	General	Students also impart learnings to teachers.
	General	Teachers and students collaborate on learning
Sports Track curriculum incorporates practical and hands-on activities	General	Teachers and students practically collaborate on tasks or lessons.
	Variant	It focuses more on the realistic and practical aspects of teaching.
	General	It is more situational and hands-on instruction.
	General	It is more about experiential learning.
	General	They develop skills collaboratively through hands-on instruction student activities.

Table 1 (cont.)

Major theme	Frequency of responses	Core ideas
Easier implementation of Sports Track curriculum	General	The curriculum is excellent and quite simple to execute.
	General	The curriculum assists teachers in making their jobs easier.
	Typical	It is balanced, advocating for both the teacher and the student.
	Variant	The curriculum is beneficial in that it is segmented by specialization.
	Variant	The curriculum is geared toward students pursuing careers in sports.
	Typical	The curriculum assists students in preparing for careers as educators.
	Variant	The curriculum is excellent since it teaches students how to be successful in sports.
	General	In some ways, this is beneficial because they will not delve deeper into the things that will be taught because they are already included in the curriculum.
	Variant	The specialized program in sports focuses on a particular area of expertise.

Note. For frequency of response, “general” means the response was mentioned by 50% or more of the participants, “typical” means the response was mentioned by at least 25% but less than 50%, and “variant” means the response was mentioned by less than 25% of the participants.

Theme 1: Sports Track Learners Are Participative, Hyperactive, and Kinesthetically Intelligent

The first main theme consolidated the developing replies in which teachers reported their observations of students' performance in physical education. The participants identified a variety of elements that led to the students' enthusiasm.

Students' physical competence and social skills increased when the classroom environment encouraged them to participate actively and become productive (Bailey, 2006). Students' motivation to engage rose when the learning experiences were geared toward their areas of interest. As well, having the confidence to perform well in a task greatly correlated to an individual's functionality (Bray, 2013).

When participants were asked about their students' performance in class, the comments frequently referenced the students' diversity and lively personalities. Their propensity for active participation in theoretical conversations over passive participation was the cause behind this tendency. Teacher 13 and Teacher 6 shared similar sentiments:

I find them quite enthusiastic about learning not only inside the classroom, but also outside its walls. They are extremely kinesthetically active, preferring to undertake the task quickly, but we must first discuss the regulation before enforcing it. (Q1, T13)

They have varying preferences . . . It is important that your strategies include physical exercises that will actually move them. They cannot afford to be idle. They are enthused. (Q1, T6)

Additionally, the participants saw that the students' varied personalities did not interfere with their ability to have a positive learning experience. Rather than that, they cooperated with one another. Teacher 5 corroborated this, whereas Teacher 6 expanded on the concept:

And then for the learners, they're good because they are different from each other. Our students are diverse. (Q1, T5)

They are all diverse that's why they have different attitudes. However, they are still able to cooperate with each other, so most probably when it comes to learning their experiences are still wonderful. (Q1, T6)

This harmonic interaction between the students and the material provided for a seamless teaching experience for the participants. Teachers 2 and 12 conveyed this conclusion:

Most of them are quick learners. They can immediately grasp the lessons and apply them smoothly. (Q1, T2)

The majority of individuals enrolling in the sports track are athletes who have competed in both local and national meets. That is why training them is not tough, as they have already gained expertise during their elementary and junior high school years. (Q12, T12)

On the other hand, as confirmed by Teachers 5 and 6, the students' prior educational experience and kinesthetic intelligence significantly aided in the assimilation of the knowledge teachers disseminated:

I admire them simply because they are born with kinesthetic intelligence. Learning by doing—the majority of them are capable of performing the task at hand. (Q1, T5)

They cannot simply sit about, and I can tell they are more enthusiastic than the other strand courses. Indeed, their intelligence is kinesthetic. (Q1, T6)

It was obvious the students had an interest in physical education and sports, which contributed to their eagerness to learn. The teachers appreciated this willingness to learn:

Learners demonstrate a desire to acquire new abilities. They, too, are competitive, but some of them behave poorly. (Q1, T4)

In terms of learners, I am most impressed by their responsiveness and enthusiasm as I train them for their future careers. (Q1, T6)

Theme 2: Teachers' Knowledge Gained in College Corresponds With Sports Track Competencies

The second theme detailed the participants' experiences imparting personal knowledge about the subject to the students. They reported happiness with their working environment, owing to their good fortune in being assigned to disciplines in which they had specialized throughout their tertiary study. This environment helped them to further develop their knowledge, enhancing the effectiveness of the information they dispensed to students. Teachers 3's and 11's testimonies corroborated this implication:

I am extremely satisfied since I implemented all of the knowledge I gained during my college years. I put it into practice and shared it with my students. That is it. (Q2, T3)

In terms of application and teaching, as a graduate of physical education, it enables me to impart knowledge in my unique area of specialization, particularly in sports . . . Teaching Senior High School Sports Track allowed me to put what I studied in my degree into practice. (Q2, T11)

Additionally, they concentrated on examining the many tactics they employed to accommodate students' learning styles. To ensure the effectiveness of the selection, teachers needed to consider the relationship between the practical application and the core knowledge and abilities of physical education (Whittle et al., 2018). Fortunately, they accommodated to them well, as Teacher 2 confirmed:

In my seven years of teaching, I've learnt a great deal. One advantage is that I am capable of catering to a variety of different sorts of learners through the varied tactics I employ in class. It's wonderful that we can cater to them all. (Q2, T2)

Gilakjani (2012) stressed the important nature of these behaviors in achieving excellent learning outcomes. Apart from academic

proficiency, he believed that a teacher should be cognizant of what students already know, to choose the most effective teaching style.

Theme 3: More Interactive Teaching–Learning

The third theme was mutual learning between students and teachers. As noted, the students' enthusiasm and passion were intrinsically linked to the subject. This means they possess a level of literacy greater than that of a teacher whose credentials do not correspond to the allocated topic. This is a common occurrence in public schools, where hired teachers lack the necessary educational background for the subjects taught in Senior High School (Orbeta et al., 2019). To address this knowledge gap, respondents established an interactive environment in which students could exchange their perspectives and learn from one another. This method was demonstrated in the responses of Teachers 8, 6, and 10:

The positive experiences I've had while teaching are as follows: first, I've gained a better understanding of physical education because I didn't pursue it as a subject of specialization; second, I've gained exposure to new knowledge and skills when teaching this type of curriculum. In terms of the learners, I also gained a great deal of knowledge from them as a result of the very dynamic classroom environment. Because some of the learners are more knowledgeable than I am, I benefited from their expertise as well. (Q2, T8)

Therefore, if you teach sports, your instruction does not revolve solely around the four corners of the classroom. Additionally, there is excellent contact outside of the classroom in an actual physical activity. (Q#2, T6)

It is not just that we teach students, but students occasionally provide us with expertise in a particular discipline. When it comes to learners, there are some who are more knowledgeable than we are. (Q2, T10)

While participants experienced inconvenience as a result of the new curriculum, this issue resulted in increased student engagement as students were encouraged to communicate more with their teachers.

This inclusiveness facilitated feedback that benefited both the teachers' teaching performance and the learners' holistic competency (Bertills et al., 2019).

Theme 4: Sports Track Curriculum Incorporates Practical and Hands-on Activities

This theme highlighted hands-on teaching–learning practices that occurred during the implementation of teachings. While it was the teacher's obligation to guarantee that physical education contributed to the overall development of the students, the expected outcomes of the performances remained the learners' responsibility (Cloes, 2017). In accordance with this, Teacher 16 described their experience researching several genres within a given field, such as dance:

We provide material to students and then let them to study independently, as we encourage them to express themselves through hands-on activities. This is one of the curriculum's strengths. Apart from that, we provide an interactive environment in which we can all learn from one another. As the level of difficulty increases, we, as their teachers, become more adaptable. (Q2, T16)

According to the participants' comments, the practice resulted in the students becoming more adaptable and incredibly competitive. Teacher 16 explained that the Sports Track curriculum pushed students to explore many genres of dance and sports and to hone their talents to compete at the highest level. Students were instilled with the ability to be adaptable and productive.

Our students are exceptionally adaptable. They can pick up any kind of dance through hands-on exercises . . . Our students become extremely productive and globally competitive as a result of the sports track curriculum. (Q2, T16)

Additionally, participants mentioned the subject's practicability, owing to their involvement in situational-based learning, where they acquired skills to apply in real life. Teachers 9 and 12 listed the physical activities in which they collaborated with their students:

The positive experiences I've gained or experienced on the Sports Track are that it's more realistic, situational, practical, and hands-on. (Q2, T9)

The positive experiences I've had while teaching are all hands-on. [Students] acquire knowledge from their experiences. We practice drills, conduct joint research, and then apply what we've learned. We work one-on-one with my players and, of course, they learn via experience, which is the best part of teaching. (Q2, T12)

According to the participants' statements, incorporating cooperative learning into the teaching technique resulted in an increase in students' productivity in terms of academic and physical performance. This strategy encouraged students to use their cognitive abilities to communicate and do tasks, allowing them to actively absorb information (Lee, 2014).

Theme 5: Easier Implementation of Sports Track Curriculum

This theme assessed the Sports Track program's curriculum. One of the components of high-quality physical education is an effective curriculum that molds students holistically and successfully assesses their performance through the establishment of criteria that define their rate of growth (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Given that the subject's objective is to execute interventions that accomplish its stated objective, it is important to ascertain whether the intervention is helpful for both teachers and students (Starc & Strel, 2012).

Participants believed the program was well balanced. It contained material that was appropriate for the students' level and a streamlined content that relieved the teachers of the burden of determining the order of lessons. The responses of Teachers 5, 4, and 10 reflected this:

Because the curriculum is changeable, it benefits us teachers. As a result, we no longer struggle as much with determining the order of the classes we want to offer to the students. (Q2, T5)

According to the curriculum, it is somewhat appropriate for the students' current level. I believe it is in some way pro-students. (Q2, T4)

In terms of curriculum, because we deal with a variety of sports, it serves as our bible, our foundation, and our guide. It is well-balanced and straightforward to implement. (Q2, T10)

Additionally, the curriculum was developed to fulfill the needs of both students and teachers. To begin, it focused on the academic and physical growth of students and prepared them to become better professionals in their chosen sport or field. Teachers 7 and 9 reviewed the curriculum's suitability for the students' information consumption, whereas Teacher 11 discussed the subjects presented in the program:

The curriculum is good; it is tailored to student-athletes who demonstrate true athletic ability. That is the most enjoyable aspect of the curriculum. (Q3, T7)

In terms of curriculum, it emphasizes specialized areas and gives opportunities for lifelong learning. (Q2, T9)

There are classes that prepare students to become future educators, such as basic sports psychology, how to interact with players, and how to identify the athletes' requirements, among others. It teaches them what they need to do to improve as coaches and players. (Q2, T11)

Additionally, the curriculum was capable of enhancing the students' current status. It enabled them to receive specialized training in the various physical activities they studied. Teachers 15 and 6 confirmed this:

The curriculum is excellent because it teaches them how to be good athletes and citizens. It's tough in a way because the majority of students on the Sports Track are really hyperactive. (Q3, T15)

The curriculum is excellent. What's great about athletics track is that it allows students to grow. Additionally, it served as a platform for students to choose from if they were not attracted toward other scales such as linguistics or logic. It enables students who are kinesthetically intelligent to succeed.”(Q3, T6)

Finally, the curriculum provided teachers with opportunities to expand their expertise to provide a higher level of physical education to their students. Teacher 13 expanded on this situation:

The positive experience that I have had as a result of the curriculum is that teachers were given time to attend seminars; for example, in athletics, they were sent to seminars and we learned the fundamental laws and regulations as well as the many sporting honors. (Q2, T13)

Conclusion

This study shows teachers' expressions of gratitude for their positive experiences of teaching Sports Track in Senior High School in the Philippines. This includes their observations of the curriculum, the school administration's management and support, and the students. The study increases understanding of the relationship between these factors and teachers' ability to maintain the effectiveness of their pedagogical content knowledge. This is important for preserving the quality of education as teachers in the Philippines continue to adjust and adapt to the system's recent paradigm.

Thus, this study implies that teachers should work in an environment conducive to professional growth, in which they can interact with competitive learners and receive adequate institutional support for training and physical activity.

Additionally, this study concludes that students on the Sports Track have multiple intelligences with a remarkable predominance in kinesthetic intelligence. Evidence for this comes from their hyperactive personalities, participative behaviors, and ability to develop a sense of versatility throughout the learning process. Additionally, their capacity to grow collectively as they develop the skills necessary to excel in a variety of competitions demonstrates the efficacy of a hands-on teaching-learning process. As a result of these observa-

tions, it may be concluded that instructional tactics should promote active participation and interaction in the learning environment.

Another conclusion from this study is the advantage conferred on physical education teachers by their postsecondary degree-based competencies in teaching specialized and applied courses. It is simpler to implement the Senior Sports Track Curriculum when teachers have broad knowledge and experience in many settings of physical education as a foundation. This allows teachers to focus on further developing their skills and proficiency to fulfill the learning demands of the students.

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