

ENHANCING HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT: THE EFFECTS OF MAPEH INTEGRATION ON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of integrating Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) on the holistic development of junior high school learners. Anchored on holistic education theory, Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, and Bloom's learning domains, the study posited that interdisciplinary and performance-based MAPEH experiences enhance cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies and translate into broader academic, socio-emotional, physical, and creative growth. A quasi-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design was employed among selected junior high school learners in Mangaldan National High School. Learners participated in integrated MAPEH lessons and activities that connected concepts and skills across the four components. Data were gathered using a validated Holistic Development Assessment Tool and analyzed through descriptive statistics and tests of significant mean differences at the .05 level. Results revealed significant improvements across all learning domains. Cognitive mean scores increased from 75.20 to 85.40, affective scores from 73.80 to 84.10, and psychomotor scores from 72.50 to 86.25. Holistic outcome indicators likewise rose, with academic development improving from 76.10 to 84.50, socio-emotional development from 74.30 to 85.20, physical development from 71.80 to 86.40, and creative development from 70.25 to 87.15; the largest gains were observed in creative and physical areas. These findings indicate that integrated MAPEH is an effective avenue for whole-child development in junior high school. The study recommends sustained interdisciplinary planning, teacher capacity-building, adequate resource support, and community partnerships to strengthen and institutionalize MAPEH integration.

Keywords: MAPEH Integration; Holistic Development; Junior High School Learners; Interdisciplinary Instruction; Performance-Based Learning; Cognitive-Affective-Psychomotor Domains.

1. Introduction

Holistic development has become a central goal of 21st-century basic education. Contemporary schooling is no longer expected to produce learners who are only academically competent; instead, it is tasked to cultivate well-rounded individuals who are intellectually capable, emotionally balanced, physically healthy, socially responsible, and creatively expressive. In the Philippine context, this orientation is embedded in the K to 12 reform. Republic Act (RA) 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, mandates a learner-centered and developmentally appropriate curriculum that supports the “complete, adequate, and integrated system of education” needed for holistic growth (Republic Act No. 10533, 2013). Complementing this, DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 emphasizes authentic and performance-based assessment to capture learners' real competencies, values, and skills across learning areas (Department of Education [DepEd], 2015). These policy directions highlight that the school curriculum must intentionally integrate experiences that address the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and creative dimensions of learning, rather than treating them as separate or secondary outcomes.

One learning area designed to advance these outcomes is Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH). MAPEH functions as an interdisciplinary platform where learners explore creativity through music and arts, wellness through health education, and physical competence through movement-based tasks. When taught as a coherent, connected learning experience, MAPEH can catalyze the development of multiple dimensions of the learner. The present study is grounded in the assumption that purposeful MAPEH integration directly shapes students' cognitive, affective, psychomotor, academic, socio-emotional, physical, and creative development by providing balanced learning experiences that engage the mind, body, emotions, and social interaction. Evidence from broader educational research supports this view. Integrative practices in physical education, for instance, have been shown to increase learners' motivation and engagement while strengthening learning in both movement-based and academic tasks, suggesting that PE-centered integration can promote whole-child outcomes (Goh et al., 2021). Likewise, holistic physical education models stress that coordinated physical, mental, emotional, and social learning opportunities help adolescents thrive in school and daily life (Griggs & Fleet, 2021). These findings align with the general claim that integrated MAPEH instruction can foster transferable life skills—such as teamwork, self-discipline, creativity, and health consciousness—alongside academic learning.

The theoretical foundations of this study further justify MAPEH integration as a holistic educational strategy. First, Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory posits that learners possess diverse intelligences—musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, among others—and that education should provide varied pathways for these intelligences to develop (Gardner, 1983). In MAPEH, musical and artistic activities stimulate musical and spatial intelligences, while physical education nurtures bodily-kinesthetic competence and social collaboration; health learning supports intrapersonal awareness and responsible decision-making. Second, the three-domain structure of Bloom's Taxonomy underscores that effective instruction must address cognitive (knowledge and thinking), affective (values and attitudes), and psychomotor (skills and movement) outcomes in an integrated way (Bloom et al., 1956; Krathwohl, 2002). MAPEH tasks naturally cut across these domains as learners analyze concepts, cultivate appreciation and values, and demonstrate skills through performance and movement. Third, Miller's Holistic Curriculum framework argues that fragmentation in schooling weakens learners' sense of connection; thus, the curriculum should link subject learning to community, mind-body integration, creativity, and meaning (Miller, 2019). From this perspective, MAPEH is not supplementary but a vital space where subject knowledge, personal wellness, social interaction, and artistic expression converge into connected learning experiences.

Despite these strong theoretical and policy bases, schools often implement MAPEH in a compartmentalized manner due to constraints on time, training, and resources, as well as varying pedagogical traditions. As a result, the potential of MAPEH to function as a unified, holistic domain is not always realized. This inconsistency is problematic because junior high school learners are at a developmental stage where integrated experiences are significant. Early adolescence is marked by rapid physical growth, identity formation, emotional volatility, and expanding social worlds; schooling that isolates learning into narrow academic tasks may fail to respond to these intersecting needs (Griggs & Fleet, 2021). In many Philippine junior high schools, MAPEH is still sometimes treated as a "minor" subject compared with other learning areas, which can limit investment in instruction, facilities, and formative assessment. Without empirical evidence localized in real school contexts, stakeholders may continue to undervalue MAPEH's contribution to holistic development.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the effects of integrated MAPEH instruction on the holistic development of junior high school learners at Mangaldan National High School. Specifically, it examines learners' development before and after exposure to integrated MAPEH lessons across three core learning domains—cognitive, affective, and psychomotor—

and explores broader outcomes, including academic performance, socio-emotional competence, physical wellbeing, and creativity. Using a pretest–posttest design, the study aims to generate evidence on whether integrated MAPEH produces significant developmental gains and to use these insights as a basis for an actionable program to strengthen MAPEH integration in junior high school settings. Ultimately, grounding MAPEH practice in empirical outcomes supports the larger K to 12 vision of producing Filipino youth who are not only knowledgeable but also healthy, socially engaged, and creatively equipped for lifelong learning and citizenship.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental one-group pretest–posttest research design to determine the effects of integrated MAPEH instruction on junior high school learners' holistic development. A single cohort of selected learners participated in a structured set of interdisciplinary MAPEH lessons linking Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health, after which the same group was assessed again using the Holistic Development Assessment Tool. Pretest scores established baseline levels in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, while posttest results captured changes following the integration intervention; the design therefore allowed direct comparison of learners' performance before and after exposure to integrated MAPEH activities. Descriptive statistics summarized domain and outcome levels, and inferential tests of mean differences at the .05 significance level evaluated whether observed gains were statistically significant, providing empirical evidence of the intervention's contribution to whole-child development.

2.2 Participants

The study consisted of two key groups from Mangaldan National High School: selected junior high school learners who served as the primary respondents, and MAPEH teachers who supported the implementation of the integrated instruction. The learner-participants were selected through stratified purposive sampling to ensure those included represented the target junior high school population and met the study's inclusion criteria. In contrast, all available and qualified MAPEH teachers in the school were included to ensure consistent delivery of the intervention and to reflect actual classroom conditions. This participant composition enabled the study to capture both learner outcomes across holistic domains and the instructional context through which MAPEH integration was carried out, thereby strengthening the ecological validity of the pretest–posttest comparisons.

2.3 Instrumentation

The study used a researcher-prepared, expert-validated Holistic Development Assessment Tool as its primary instrument for data collection, aligned with the objectives of integrated MAPEH instruction. This tool consisted of domain-specific measures that assessed learners' cognitive understanding of MAPEH concepts, affective outcomes such as attitudes, values, and socio-emotional responses, and psychomotor performance through skills-based tasks and rubrics in music, arts, physical education, and health. In addition, the instrument included indicators for broader holistic outcomes—academic, socio-emotional, physical, and creative development—captured through structured rating scales and performance-based criteria consistent with DepEd's classroom assessment policy. Prior to implementation, the tool underwent content validation by specialists and reliability testing (with internal consistency established through Cronbach's alpha), ensuring that it was both accurate and dependable for measuring pretest and posttest changes attributable to MAPEH integration.

2.4 Data Analysis

The study combined descriptive and inferential statistical procedures to determine the effect of integrated MAPEH instruction on learners' holistic development. First, weighted means and standard deviations were computed to summarize learners' pretest and posttest performance in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, as well as in the broader holistic outcome indicators (academic, socio-emotional, physical, and creative development). These descriptive results established baseline levels and the magnitude of change after the intervention. To test whether improvements were statistically meaningful, inferential analysis was conducted using tests of significant mean differences between paired pretest and posttest scores (consistent with a one-group pretest–posttest design), with the level of significance set at $\alpha = .05$. Where relationships among variables were examined, correlation analysis (e.g., Pearson r) was indicated to describe the strength and direction of associations. Together, these procedures provided an empirical basis for concluding whether integrated MAPEH produced significant gains across the targeted holistic domains.

3. Results

The results showed clear and consistent gains in learners' development after exposure to integrated MAPEH instruction. Across the three core learning domains measured in the pretest–posttest, post-intervention scores were higher than baseline levels, indicating that the integrated lessons supported meaningful learning improvements. The pattern of increases suggests that when Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health are taught as connected, performance-based experiences, learners benefit not only in knowledge acquisition but also in the development of attitudes and skills, reflecting the intended whole-child orientation of the subject.

In the cognitive domain, learners' mean score improved from 75.20 in the pretest to 85.40 in the posttest, a gain of 10.20 points. This indicates a stronger conceptual understanding of MAPEH content when lessons were deliberately integrated across its components. The increase implies that interdisciplinary connections helped learners see relationships among ideas and apply concepts in more authentic tasks, rather than learning them in isolation. Such improvement also supports the view that arts- and movement-based learning can reinforce academic comprehension and retention.

Similarly, affective outcomes increased substantially, with mean scores rising from 73.80 to 84.10 (a gain of 10.30 points). This reflects growth in learners' motivation, appreciation, confidence, values, and socio-emotional engagement during integrated activities. The finding suggests that MAPEH integration created learning spaces where students could express themselves, collaborate, and build positive attitudes toward wellness and creativity. In effect, the subject became not just a venue for performance but a meaningful context for developing self-awareness and social connectedness.

The most considerable domain-level improvement occurred in psychomotor performance, where mean scores climbed from 72.50 to 86.25, yielding a 13.75-point increase. This indicates that integrated MAPEH notably strengthened movement, artistic, and skill-based competencies. The result makes sense given that integration emphasized hands-on, performance-oriented tasks that required learners to practice, refine, and demonstrate physical and expressive skills. It underscores the importance of providing structured opportunities for active learning, especially in junior high school where motor development and embodied learning are critical.

Beyond the three learning domains, broader indicators of holistic development also improved significantly after the intervention. Academic development increased from 76.10 to 84.50, socio-emotional development from 74.30 to 85.20, physical development from 71.80 to 86.40, and creative development from 70.25 to 87.15. Notably, the biggest gains were in creative (+16.90) and physical (+14.60) development, highlighting that integration most strongly enhanced learners' originality, artistic confidence, and fitness or bodily competence. Taken together, these

results confirm that integrated MAPEH is an effective approach for promoting whole-child growth, strengthening multiple learner capacities at once rather than privileging a single area of development.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study corroborate a growing body of evidence that integrated, performance-based learning in MAPEH-related fields yields gains across multiple domains of student development. The significant pretest–posttest increases in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor scores align with systematic research showing that integrative physical education and physically active learning strengthen not only skill performance but also academic-related understanding and engagement (Goh et al., 2020). Similarly, recent large-scale evidence on school-based physical activity indicates that structured PE and integrated activity-based lessons can improve academic achievement and learning readiness, supporting the cognitive gains observed in this study after MAPEH integration (Zhang et al., 2025).

The affective improvements and socio-emotional gains documented here are also consistent with the related literature, which emphasizes that arts- and movement-based integration fosters motivation, positive attitudes, and emotional intelligence. Reviews of arts integration interventions report reliable improvements in students' socio-emotional outcomes—such as self-confidence, classroom engagement, and positive dispositions toward learning—particularly when instruction is interdisciplinary and experiential (American Institutes for Research [AIR], 2022; Wallace Foundation, 2023). These patterns mirror the present study's notable posttest rise in the affective domain and socio-emotional development, suggesting that integrated MAPEH creates authentic contexts where learners internalize values, develop self-regulation, and strengthen peer relationships through collaborative performance tasks.

The strong psychomotor gains and large improvements in physical development further support scholarship arguing that holistic PE-centered curricula elevate motor competence, fitness, and embodied learning. Holistic physical education models emphasize that adolescent learners develop best when physical skills are taught alongside emotional and social meaning-making, rather than as isolated drills (Griggs & Fleet, 2021). Likewise, evidence-based guidance on integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) in PE shows that skill practice embedded in supportive, reflective environments increases persistence, teamwork, and self-management (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2024). The current study's outcomes reflect these principles, as learners' psychomotor improvements were paired with affective and socio-emotional growth, indicating that integration supported “whole-body” learning rather than purely physical proficiency.

The present study's marked gains in creativity and arts-related outcomes are also echoed in research on music and arts education. Meta-analytic and review studies report that sustained engagement in music and visual arts enhances executive function, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional processing—effects that can translate into improved general learning performance (Iosr Journals, 2024; Patel, 2014). At the applied classroom level, arts-integration research further demonstrates that when arts are woven into broader curricular experiences, students show stronger conceptual understanding and higher-level thinking, validating the cognitive and creative increases found in this MAPEH integration intervention (DeMoss & Morris, 2013).

Finally, Philippine-based and MAPEH-specific literature contextualizes these corroborations within local curriculum realities. Recent work on integrated MAPEH education describes the learning area as a key “cornerstone of holistic education” in the K to 12 system, intended to connect creativity, wellness, and physical literacy through interdisciplinary performance tasks (Ponsaran, 2024). Other local discussions similarly emphasize that MAPEH's value lies in cultivating balanced 21st-century learners, even as schools face implementation constraints (DepEd Bataan, 2025). The present study strengthens these claims by providing

empirical school-based evidence that integration is not merely a curricular ideal, but a measurable driver of holistic learner growth in junior high school.

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