

INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES IN TEACHING MUSIC, ARTS, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND HEALTH ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

Holistic education in junior high school requires instructional approaches that connect cognitive, physical, emotional, social, artistic, and health-related learning experiences. This study investigated the effects of integrative approaches in teaching Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health on student engagement, holistic development, and academic performance among junior high school learners in Pangasinan I Schools Division during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it determined the perceived effectiveness of integrative approaches as rated by teachers and students, compared the holistic development scores of students exposed and not exposed to integrative MAPEH instruction, examined the extent of integrative approach implementation, assessed academic performance in core subjects, tested the relationship between integration and academic performance, and proposed pedagogical guidelines for improved MAPEH instruction. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative and correlational research design involving 150 junior high school students and 10 MAPEH teachers. Data were gathered using structured survey questionnaires and official academic records, and analyzed using means and standard deviations, independent-samples t-tests, and Pearson correlations. Findings revealed that both teachers and students perceived integrative approaches as highly effective. Students exposed to integrative MAPEH instruction obtained higher holistic development scores than those taught through non-integrative approaches, and the difference was statistically significant. Teachers reported a moderately high extent of integrative implementation. Students exposed to integrative instruction also showed higher academic performance, and the extent of integration was positively correlated with academic achievement. The study concluded that integrative MAPEH instruction enhances engagement, holistic development, and academic performance.

Keywords: Integrative Approaches, MAPEH Instruction, Student Engagement, Holistic Development, Academic Performance, Junior High School

1. Introduction

Holistic education has become an important direction in contemporary basic education because schools are increasingly expected to develop learners not only academically but also physically, socially, emotionally, creatively, and ethically. This expectation is especially relevant in junior high school, where learners are undergoing rapid developmental changes and require learning experiences that support identity formation, peer interaction, self-expression, health awareness, and academic growth. Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) is uniquely positioned to contribute to this goal because it combines artistic, physical, cultural, behavioral, and wellness-oriented learning areas. However, when the four components of MAPEH are taught as isolated units, opportunities for meaningful interdisciplinary learning may be reduced. Integrative approaches offer a way to connect these components into more coherent, relevant, and developmentally responsive learning experiences.

Integrative approaches in teaching MAPEH refer to instructional strategies that combine concepts from Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health into interconnected lessons, activities,

and performance tasks. These approaches may include interdisciplinary projects, movement-based artistic activities, health-related performance tasks, music-supported physical activities, arts-based reflections on wellness, and collaborative outputs that require students to apply learning across multiple MAPEH domains. Such approaches align with the view that learning becomes more meaningful when students connect concepts across disciplines and apply them to real-life contexts. In MAPEH, integration can help learners understand that music, movement, creativity, health practices, teamwork, discipline, and personal well-being are not separate school requirements but interrelated dimensions of human development.

The growing emphasis on culture and arts education supports the relevance of integrative MAPEH instruction. UNESCO (2024) emphasized that culture and arts education help develop creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, well-being, and academic outcomes, while also promoting openness and respect for diversity. Similarly, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development reviewed empirical evidence showing that arts education is often associated with creative thinking, communication, cooperation, self-confidence, and other innovation-related skills, although the report also cautioned that evidence on transfer to non-arts academic outcomes should be interpreted carefully (Winner et al., 2013). These perspectives suggest that integrative MAPEH instruction may contribute to holistic learning, but its effects must be examined empirically within specific school contexts.

The performance-based nature of MAPEH also strengthens the need for integrative teaching. Research on performing arts shows that learning in artistic contexts often involves multimodal practices such as rhythm, movement, demonstration, correction, mirroring, cues, collaboration, and repeated performance (Cekaite & Björk-Willén, 2021). These practices are highly compatible with MAPEH because students learn through the body, senses, emotions, and social interaction. When teachers integrate music, arts, physical movement, and health concepts, students may experience richer forms of engagement that go beyond passive listening or written recall. Integrative lessons may therefore increase behavioral engagement through active participation, emotional engagement through enjoyment and relevance, and cognitive engagement through deeper connection-making and reflection.

Physical education and health components also contribute to the rationale for integrative MAPEH instruction. Research on physical activity and academic achievement indicates that physical activity is not detrimental to academic performance and may even be beneficial, especially when implemented consistently and meaningfully in school contexts (Bangsbo et al., 2020). This supports the idea that physical and health-related learning should not be treated as separate from academic development. In an integrative MAPEH, movement, wellness, discipline, creativity, and teamwork can be part of a broader learning environment that supports both student development and school performance. Such integration is particularly important for adolescents, who benefit from learning experiences that connect health habits, social interaction, self-expression, and academic motivation.

Despite the potential value of integrative MAPEH instruction, several gaps remain. Many studies on interdisciplinary learning focus on general curriculum integration, arts education, physical activity, or health promotion, but fewer directly examine the combined use of Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health within the junior high school curriculum. There is also a need for localized evidence on how teachers and students perceive integrative approaches, whether these approaches are associated with higher student engagement and holistic development, and whether the extent of integration is associated with academic performance in core subjects. These gaps are important because MAPEH is often perceived as a practical or performance-based subject, yet it may have broader developmental value when taught through intentional interdisciplinary strategies.

Accordingly, the present study investigated the effects of integrative approaches in teaching MAPEH on student engagement and holistic development among junior high school

learners in Pangasinan I Schools Division. Specifically, it determined the perceived effectiveness of integrative approaches as rated by teachers and students, compared the holistic development scores of students who experienced integrative instruction with those who did not, examined the extent of integrative approach implementation in MAPEH classes, assessed students' academic performance in core subjects, and tested the relationship between the extent of integration and academic performance. Based on the findings, the study aimed to propose specific pedagogical guidelines to maximize the use of integrative approaches in MAPEH. Through this inquiry, the study sought to provide empirical support for curriculum improvement, teacher professional development, and more holistic junior high school instruction.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research design integrating descriptive, comparative, and correlational approaches to investigate the effects of integrative approaches in teaching MAPEH on student engagement, holistic development, and academic performance among junior high school students. The descriptive component was used to determine the perceived effectiveness of integrative approaches, as rated by teachers and students, and the extent to which they were implemented in MAPEH classes. The comparative component was used to examine whether there were significant differences in holistic development scores between students who experienced integrative MAPEH instruction and those who did not. Meanwhile, the correlational component was used to determine the relationship between the extent of integrative approaches and students' academic performance in core subjects. This design was appropriate because the study sought to measure observable variables, compare learner outcomes across instructional exposure groups, and test statistical relationships without manipulating the classroom environment. Through this quantitative design, the study generated empirical evidence that served as the basis for proposing pedagogical guidelines to strengthen integrative MAPEH instruction and promote student engagement, holistic development, and academic achievement.

2.2 Participants

The study consisted of 150 junior high school students from Grades 7 to 10 and 10 MAPEH teachers from selected public secondary schools in Pangasinan I Schools Division during School Year 2025–2026. The student participants served as the primary sources of data on engagement, holistic development, exposure to integrative MAPEH instruction, and academic performance, while the teacher participants provided information on the perceived effectiveness and extent of implementation of integrative approaches in MAPEH classes. Students were included if they were officially enrolled in a public junior high school within the division, had completed at least one full grading period of MAPEH instruction, and had provided assent with parental or guardian consent. Teachers were included if they were full-time MAPEH teachers, had at least one year of teaching experience in the MAPEH curriculum, and had implemented either integrative or traditional teaching approaches. This participant structure was appropriate because the study required data from both learners who experienced the instructional approaches and teachers who implemented them. By including both student and teacher respondents, the study provided a comprehensive quantitative basis for examining the effects of integrative MAPEH instruction on engagement, holistic development, and academic performance.

2.3 Instrumentation

The study utilized structured quantitative instruments to gather data on integrative MAPEH instruction, student engagement, holistic development, and academic performance. For student respondents, a structured survey questionnaire was administered to measure behavioral,

emotional, and cognitive engagement; holistic development in terms of physical literacy, artistic competence, health awareness, emotional wellness, and social interaction skills; and exposure to integrative MAPEH teaching. For teacher respondents, a separate questionnaire was used to determine the perceived effectiveness of integrative approaches and the extent to which Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health concepts were integrated in classroom instruction. Both student and teacher questionnaires used a five-point Likert scale to allow numerical interpretation and statistical analysis of responses. Academic performance data were obtained from official school records, particularly students' final grades in core subjects, to provide an objective measure of achievement. Additional school documents, such as class lists, attendance records, and MAPEH teaching schedules, were reviewed to verify participant eligibility and support data accuracy. The instruments were validated by experts in MAPEH and educational research and were pilot-tested prior to full administration to establish clarity, relevance, and reliability. Using these instruments, the study generated systematic, measurable data to examine the effects of integrative approaches on student engagement, holistic development, and academic performance.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive, comparative, and correlational statistical procedures aligned with the study's objectives. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage, were used to summarize the perceived effectiveness of integrative approaches in MAPEH as rated by teachers and students; the extent of integrative approach implementation; students' holistic development scores; and students' academic performance in core subjects. To determine whether there was a significant difference in holistic development scores between students who experienced integrative MAPEH instruction and those who did not, an independent-samples t-test was employed. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the extent of integrative approaches in teaching MAPEH and students' academic performance. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. These statistical procedures enabled the study to determine the perceived value of integrative instruction, compare developmental outcomes between instructional exposure groups, and establish whether greater use of integrative approaches was significantly associated with higher academic performance. The results served as the empirical basis for proposing pedagogical guidelines to strengthen integrative MAPEH instruction.

3 Results

The results showed that integrative approaches in teaching MAPEH were perceived as highly effective by both teachers and students. Teacher respondents obtained a mean rating of 4.32, while student respondents obtained a mean rating of 4.18, both indicating highly effective performance. These findings indicate that both groups recognized the value of integrating Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health concepts into meaningful, interconnected learning experiences. The high ratings suggest that integrative MAPEH instruction enhanced lesson clarity, strengthened students' interest, and helped learners connect concepts across the four components of the subject.

The study also revealed that students who experienced integrative MAPEH instruction demonstrated higher holistic development than those who did not. Students exposed to integrative approaches obtained a mean holistic development score of 4.27, indicating high development, while those who experienced non-integrative instruction obtained a lower mean score of 3.81, indicating moderate development. This finding suggests that integrative MAPEH instruction contributed positively to learners' physical literacy, artistic expression, emotional awareness, social interaction, teamwork, and health-related competencies. The result implies that

interconnected MAPEH activities may support more balanced learner development than discipline-separated instruction.

The comparison of holistic development scores between the two groups showed a statistically significant difference. The t-test yielded a t-value of 6.21 and a p-value of $<.001$, indicating that the difference between students exposed to integrative MAPEH instruction and those not exposed was significant. This result confirms that integrative instruction was associated with stronger holistic development outcomes among junior high school learners. It further suggests that when MAPEH concepts are taught through interdisciplinary activities, students are more likely to develop not only subject-related skills but also broader developmental competencies.

In terms of implementation, the extent of using integrative approaches in MAPEH was rated moderately high, with a mean of 3.94. This indicates that MAPEH teachers were already applying integrative strategies in their lessons, although implementation was not yet at the highest level. The finding suggests that teachers may already be combining two or more MAPEH components, designing interdisciplinary performance tasks, and using integrated activities, but there remains a need for more systematic lesson planning, collaboration, training, and instructional support to strengthen consistency in practice.

The academic performance results showed that students exposed to integrative MAPEH instruction achieved a higher mean score of 87.45 than those not exposed to integrative instruction (83.12). Furthermore, the Pearson correlation showed a moderate positive relationship between the extent of integrative approaches and academic performance, with an r-value of .41 and a p-value of $<.001$. This means that greater implementation of integrative approaches was associated with higher academic performance in core subjects. Overall, the findings support the conclusion that integrative MAPEH instruction positively contributes to student engagement, holistic development, and academic achievement, thereby providing a strong basis for developing pedagogical guidelines.

4. Discussion

The finding that both teachers and students perceived integrative approaches in MAPEH as highly effective supports the value of interdisciplinary instruction in creating meaningful and engaging learning experiences. In the study, teachers and students gave high ratings to integrative MAPEH instruction, suggesting that combining Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health helped make lessons clearer, more relevant, and more connected to real-life applications. This result is consistent with UNESCO's position that culture and arts education contribute to creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, well-being, and academic outcomes (UNESCO, 2024). Since MAPEH naturally involves artistic expression, movement, performance, collaboration, and health awareness, an integrative approach enables learners to experience the subject as a unified, practical field rather than as four separate components.

The higher holistic development scores of students exposed to integrative MAPEH instruction further confirm that interdisciplinary teaching can support multidimensional learner growth. Students who received integrative instruction achieved higher mean scores than those who did not, indicating stronger development in physical literacy, artistic expression, social interaction, emotional awareness, and health-related competencies. This finding aligns with the OECD review of arts education, which explains that arts learning is associated with creative thinking, communication, cooperation, self-confidence, and other skills relevant to holistic learner development (Winner et al., 2013). In the context of the present study, integrative MAPEH instruction appears to provide a learning environment where learners can simultaneously develop cognitive, social, emotional, artistic, and physical competencies.

The significant difference in holistic development between students exposed to integrative MAPEH and those taught through non-integrative approaches provides stronger evidence that

instructional design affects learner outcomes. The significant t-test result indicates that the difference between the two groups was not incidental but statistically meaningful. This finding may be explained by the nature of integrative MAPEH activities, which often involve performance tasks, group outputs, movement-based learning, creative production, health-related decision-making, and reflective activities. Cekaite and Björk-Willén (2021) emphasized that performing arts learning involves multimodal interactions such as demonstration, correction, mirroring, rhythm, movement, and collaboration. These practices are closely aligned with integrative MAPEH instruction and may help explain why learners exposed to integrated lessons demonstrated stronger holistic development.

The result, showing a moderately high level of integrative approach implementation, suggests that MAPEH teachers were already applying interdisciplinary teaching practices, although there remained room for improvement. This finding implies that teachers may be combining two or more MAPEH components, designing interdisciplinary performance tasks, and using integrated activities, but implementation may not yet be consistent across all lessons and classrooms. The moderately high rating indicates a need for more systematic pedagogical support, including collaborative lesson planning, professional development, instructional materials, monitoring tools, and school-level encouragement. Without these supports, integrative instruction may depend largely on individual teacher initiative, leading to uneven implementation.

Finally, the higher academic performance of students exposed to integrative MAPEH instruction and the moderate positive correlation between extent of integration and academic performance suggest that integrative MAPEH may contribute not only to holistic development but also to broader academic achievement. This result supports the view that active, meaningful, and interdisciplinary learning can strengthen learner engagement, motivation, and cognitive involvement. Bangsbo et al. (2020) reported that physical activity is not harmful to academic achievement and may support learning outcomes when implemented meaningfully in school contexts. Similarly, the OECD review noted that arts education may be associated with academic motivation and non-arts learning outcomes, although these relationships should be interpreted with caution, as academic performance is influenced by many factors (Winner et al., 2013). Thus, the present findings justify the development of pedagogical guidelines that promote interdisciplinary lesson planning, collaborative MAPEH activities, integration of health and arts concepts, performance-based learning, and continuous teacher training.

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