

**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

In contemporary junior high school contexts, the demand for holistic, engaging, and developmentally responsive instruction has intensified the need to examine integrative approaches in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH). This study investigated the effects of integrative MAPEH teaching on student engagement, holistic development, and academic performance among junior high school learners in Pangasinan I Schools Division during 2025–2026. Employing a quantitative descriptive-comparative and correlational design, the study involved 150 Grades 7–10 students and 10 MAPEH teachers selected from public schools. Data were gathered through validated survey questionnaires measuring perceived effectiveness, implementation extent, engagement, and holistic development, while academic performance was obtained from school records. Descriptive statistics, an independent-samples t-test, and Pearson's correlation were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that teachers ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.41$) and students ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.52$) perceived integrative approaches as highly effective. Students exposed to integrative MAPEH instruction recorded higher holistic development scores ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.39$) than those who experienced non-integrative instruction ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.44$), with a significant difference between groups, $t(148) = 6.21$, $p < .001$. The extent of implementation was moderately high ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.47$), and academic performance was higher among the integrative group ($M = 87.45$) than the comparison group ($M = 83.12$). A moderate positive correlation emerged between the extent of implementation and academic performance ($r = .41$, $p < .001$). The study concludes that integrative MAPEH instruction enhances learner engagement, holistic development, and academic achievement.

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

1. Introduction

Education systems are increasingly expected to produce learners who are not only academically competent but also healthy, expressive, socially connected, and able to apply knowledge in real-life situations. This expectation is particularly relevant in junior high school, where learners experience rapid physical, emotional, social, and cognitive changes that require instruction to move beyond fragmented subject delivery. Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) is uniquely positioned to support this broader developmental agenda because it combines creative expression, movement, wellness, cultural understanding, and performance-based learning within a single curricular space. When taught integratively, MAPEH can become more than a set of separate components; it can function as a meaningful learning environment where students sing, create, move, reflect, collaborate, and make health-related decisions in ways that connect school learning with everyday life.

Recent literature supports the growing relevance of interdisciplinary instruction. A systematic review of secondary school interdisciplinarity found that interdisciplinary practices can promote student learning, interest, interpersonal skills, and teacher professional development, although authentic integration remains limited without strong conceptual links and favorable school conditions (Tonnetti & Lentillon-Kaestner, 2023). Similarly, White and Delaney (2021)

reported that interdisciplinary STEAM learning in high school settings is promising, particularly when implemented through real-world, project- or problem-based tasks, yet they also noted that empirical evidence remains insufficient for wide-scale adoption. These findings suggest that integration is not simply the act of combining subjects; rather, it requires deliberate lesson design, teacher readiness, appropriate resources, and assessment practices that capture multidimensional learning.

The value of integration is especially visible when the arts, movement, and health are considered as complementary dimensions of development. Arts education has been associated with improved school engagement, emotional empathy, writing achievement, and student discipline, indicating that creative learning experiences can influence both academic and socio-emotional outcomes (Bowen & Kisida, 2023). In physical education, evidence also shows that school-based physical activity may contribute to selected academic outcomes and cognitive functions when meaningfully embedded in school routines (Loturco et al., 2022). Health education likewise benefits from whole-school and systems-based approaches. The World Health Organization and UNESCO (2021) emphasized that schools are important settings for both education and well-being and that health-promoting schools should strengthen physical, social-emotional, and psychological conditions for learning. Taken together, these studies affirm that music, arts, physical activity, and health concepts can jointly support learners who are intellectually active, physically capable, emotionally aware, socially responsive, and health-conscious.

Student engagement provides an important pathway through which integrative MAPEH instruction may influence learning outcomes. Engagement is not a single behavior but a multidimensional construct involving participation, effort, attention, interest, emotional investment, and agency. Reeve et al. (2025), in a meta-analysis of student engagement, found that different engagement types serve distinct purposes: behavioral engagement is most strongly linked to achievement, and emotional engagement is strongly associated with motivation and well-being. This is important for MAPEH because integrative lessons often require students to perform, collaborate, solve problems, create outputs, reflect on health choices, and participate physically. These activities naturally activate behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement, making MAPEH a fertile context for studying how instructional integration relates to student development and academic performance.

Holistic development is also central to the present inquiry. Contemporary education discourse increasingly recognizes that academic rigor and holistic growth should not be treated as competing priorities. Datnow et al. (2022) argued that education systems seeking holistic student development attend to intellectual, physical, emotional, social, cultural, and moral dimensions while still sustaining academic quality. This view aligns closely with the nature of MAPEH, where learning outcomes cannot be fully understood through grades alone. A student who participates confidently in a group performance, observes proper movement and safety practices, appreciates cultural expression, and applies health knowledge is demonstrating development that extends beyond conventional academic achievement. Thus, examining holistic development in MAPEH allows the study to capture outcomes that are often visible in classroom life but underrepresented in formal research measures.

Despite the theoretical and empirical support for integrative instruction, important gaps remain. Existing interdisciplinary research often focuses on STEM/STEAM or general secondary instruction, while MAPEH-specific studies remain limited. Local evidence also suggests that MAPEH teachers need continued support in strengthening technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge for effective instruction (Didulo, 2023). Moreover, much of the available literature discusses engagement, arts learning, physical activity, or health promotion separately, leaving limited evidence on how the combined use of Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health affects junior high school learners. In particular, there is a need to examine whether students

exposed to integrative MAPEH demonstrate stronger holistic development than those who experience traditional, discipline-separated instruction, and whether the extent of integrative implementation is associated with academic performance in core subjects.

Responding to these gaps, the present study investigates the effects of integrative approaches in teaching MAPEH on student engagement, holistic development, and academic performance among junior high school learners. It examines perceived effectiveness as rated by teachers and students, compares the holistic development scores of learners exposed and not exposed to integrative instruction, determines the extent of implementation, and analyzes its relationship with academic performance. By situating the inquiry within the Pangasinan I Schools Division, the study provides localized empirical evidence on how an integrative MAPEH pedagogy may support more engaging, developmentally responsive, and academically meaningful learning experiences. Ultimately, the study aims to provide a basis for pedagogical guidelines that can help teachers design MAPEH lessons that are not only connected across disciplines but also responsive to the whole learner.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research design integrating descriptive, comparative, and correlational approaches to examine the effects of integrative approaches in teaching Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) on junior high school students' engagement, holistic development, and academic performance. This design was appropriate because the study sought to generate objective, measurable, and statistically interpretable evidence regarding the instructional value of integrative MAPEH practices. The descriptive component was used to determine the perceived effectiveness and extent of implementation of integrative approaches among teachers and students, thereby providing a clear profile of how interdisciplinary MAPEH instruction was practiced in the classroom. The comparative component enabled the study to determine whether significant differences existed in the holistic development of students who received integrative MAPEH instruction compared with those exposed to non-integrative or conventional approaches. Meanwhile, the correlational component was employed to examine the relationship between the extent of integrative MAPEH implementation and students' academic performance in core subjects. Through this combined design, the study captured both the current state of instructional practice and the measurable associations among key learning outcomes. The use of quantitative procedures also strengthened the objectivity of the inquiry, as data were obtained through structured survey instruments and official academic records, and then analyzed using appropriate statistical tools, including means, standard deviations, independent-samples t-tests, and Pearson correlations. Overall, the research design provided a systematic and rigorous framework for determining whether integrative MAPEH instruction contributes meaningfully to student engagement, holistic development, and academic achievement.

2.2 Participants

The study consisted of junior high school students and MAPEH teachers from selected public secondary schools in the Pangasinan I Schools Division. A total of 150 students from Grades 7 to 10 and 10 full-time MAPEH teachers were involved, representing learning environments situated in rural, semi-urban, and coastal communities. The inclusion of both learners and teachers provided a balanced source of data, as students supplied information on engagement, holistic development, exposure to integrative MAPEH instruction, and academic performance, while teachers contributed data on the perceived effectiveness and extent of implementation of integrative approaches. Student participants were included if they were officially enrolled in Grades 7 to 10, had completed at least one full grading period of MAPEH

instruction, and had provided assent with parental or guardian consent. Teacher participants were included if they were full-time MAPEH teachers in Pangasinan I, had at least 1 year of teaching experience, and had implemented either an integrative or a traditional MAPEH approach. Participants who lacked sufficient instructional exposure, submitted incomplete responses, transferred during data collection, or did not meet the established criteria were excluded to preserve data validity. This participant composition enabled the study to capture both learner outcomes and instructional practices within diverse classroom contexts.

2.3 Instrumentation

The study employed structured survey questionnaires and documentary records as the principal instruments for data collection. For student respondents, the questionnaire comprised sections measuring student engagement, holistic development, exposure to integrative MAPEH instruction, and relevant demographic information. Student engagement was assessed in terms of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement, while holistic development covered physical literacy, artistic competence, health awareness, emotional wellness, and social interaction skills. Exposure to integrative MAPEH teaching was also measured to classify students based on whether they had experienced lessons integrating Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health concepts. For teacher respondents, a separate questionnaire was used to determine the extent to which integrative approaches were implemented in classroom instruction and how effective these approaches were perceived to be in improving student learning outcomes. Both student and teacher instruments used a five-point Likert scale, allowing responses to be converted into quantitative data suitable for statistical analysis. To strengthen validity, the instruments were reviewed by MAPEH and research experts, while pilot testing was conducted among respondents outside the study sample to establish reliability. In addition to survey data, students' official grades in core subjects were obtained from school records and served as objective indicators of academic performance. Class lists, attendance records, and teaching schedules were also consulted to verify participant eligibility and ensure the completeness and accuracy of the dataset.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data gathered in the study were encoded, organized, and analyzed using quantitative statistical procedures appropriate to the descriptive-comparative and correlational nature of the research. Descriptive statistics, particularly frequency counts, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the perceived effectiveness of integrative approaches, the extent of their implementation in MAPEH classes, students' engagement, holistic development scores, and academic performance. To determine whether students exposed to integrative MAPEH instruction differed significantly from those who experienced non-integrative or conventional instruction, an independent-samples t-test was employed, allowing the study to compare group means in holistic development. Meanwhile, Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine the degree and direction of association between the extent of integrative MAPEH implementation and students' academic performance in core subjects. The use of these statistical tools enabled the researcher to move beyond simple description by identifying measurable differences and relationships among the major study variables. Results were interpreted using statistical values, levels of significance, and corresponding qualitative descriptions to ensure the findings were presented with clarity, objectivity, and empirical grounding. Overall, the data analysis procedure provided a systematic basis for determining whether integrative approaches in MAPEH were associated with improved learner engagement, holistic development, and academic achievement.

3 Results

The findings revealed that integrative approaches in teaching Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) were perceived as highly effective by both teachers and

students. Teacher-respondents obtained a mean rating of 4.32 with a standard deviation of 0.41, while student-respondents recorded a mean rating of 4.18 with a standard deviation of 0.52. These results suggest a strong shared recognition of the instructional value of integrative MAPEH practices. From the perspective of teachers, integration allowed the four components of MAPEH to be delivered in a more connected and purposeful manner. From the perspective of students, such approaches appeared to make learning more meaningful, engaging, and easier to relate to real-life situations. This indicates that integrative instruction was not merely viewed as an alternative teaching strategy but as a relevant pedagogical approach that enhanced classroom experience and learner participation.

The comparison of holistic development scores showed that students who experienced integrative MAPEH instruction achieved higher developmental outcomes than those taught through non-integrative or conventional approaches. The integrative group had a mean score of 4.27 with a standard deviation of 0.39, indicating high development, while the non-integrative group had a mean score of 3.81 with a standard deviation of 0.44, indicating moderate development. This difference implies that exposure to integrative MAPEH lessons may have strengthened students' growth across physical, emotional, social, artistic, and health-related domains. Since MAPEH naturally involves performance, movement, creativity, collaboration, and wellness awareness, its integrated delivery may have provided learners with richer opportunities to develop as whole persons rather than as recipients of isolated subject content.

The independent samples t-test further confirmed that the difference in holistic development between the two groups was statistically significant, with $t = 6.21$, $df = 148$, and $p < .001$. This result provides empirical support for the claim that integrative MAPEH instruction produces measurable developmental advantages among junior high school learners. The significant difference suggests that students exposed to interdisciplinary learning experiences were more likely to demonstrate balanced growth than those who experienced separated or traditional delivery of MAPEH components. In practical terms, this finding emphasizes the importance of designing lessons that connect music, arts, physical education, and health into unified learning tasks, as such integration appears to deepen not only student participation but also personal and social development.

The study also found that the extent of using integrative approaches in MAPEH was moderately high, with a mean of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 0.47. This indicates that teachers were already implementing integrative strategies in their classes, although the level of implementation had not yet reached full consistency. The result suggests that while teachers recognized the value of integration and applied it in instruction, there may still be areas requiring improvement, such as interdisciplinary lesson planning, availability of instructional resources, teacher collaboration, and professional development. This finding is important because the success of integrative MAPEH instruction depends not only on teacher willingness but also on sustained institutional support, capacity-building, and curriculum alignment.

In terms of academic performance, students exposed to integrative MAPEH instruction achieved a higher mean grade of 87.45 compared with 83.12 for those who received non-integrative instruction. Moreover, the Pearson correlation showed a moderate positive relationship between the extent of integrative MAPEH implementation and academic performance ($r = .41$, $p < .001$). This means that higher levels of integrative teaching were associated with better academic outcomes in core subjects. Although the correlation does not imply direct causation, the result suggests that integrative MAPEH instruction may contribute to broader academic success by improving engagement, motivation, confidence, creativity, and cognitive involvement. Overall, the findings indicate that integrative MAPEH approaches have meaningful instructional value, particularly in enhancing student engagement, promoting holistic development, and supporting academic achievement.

4. Discussion

The study's findings affirm that integrative approaches in teaching MAPEH were perceived as highly effective by both teachers and students, indicating that interdisciplinary instruction is pedagogically meaningful when learners are given opportunities to connect Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health within unified learning experiences. This result is consistent with Tonnetti and Lentillon-Kaestner (2023), who emphasized that interdisciplinary teaching in secondary schools can strengthen students' learning, interest, and interpersonal development when integration is intentionally designed rather than superficially combined. In the present study, the high ratings from teachers and students suggest that integrative MAPEH instruction enabled learners to experience lessons as more connected, relevant, and participatory. This finding also supports White and Delaney's (2021) view that interdisciplinary learning becomes more powerful when it is organized around authentic, activity-based, and problem-centered tasks. In this sense, integrative MAPEH may have increased the instructional value of the subject by transforming separate content areas into a coherent learning experience that encourages creativity, movement, reflection, collaboration, and real-life application.

The higher holistic development scores among students exposed to integrative MAPEH instruction corroborate the growing literature on whole-child education. Datnow et al. (2022) argued that education systems should intentionally support learners' intellectual, physical, emotional, social, cultural, and moral development rather than focusing solely on academic measures. The results of the present study support this principle, as students who experienced integrative instruction demonstrated greater development across physical, emotional, social, artistic, and health-related domains. This is further supported by the World Health Organization and UNESCO (2021), which emphasized that schools should promote life skills, socio-emotional competencies, and healthy lifestyles as part of quality education. Since MAPEH naturally involves movement, creative expression, teamwork, wellness practices, and self-awareness, its integrative delivery provides a strong instructional pathway for holistic development. Thus, the significant difference in holistic development between the integrative and non-integrative groups suggests that learners benefit more when MAPEH is taught as an interconnected developmental experience rather than as isolated subject components.

The significant difference between students exposed to integrative MAPEH and those taught through conventional approaches also aligns with evidence on arts education and physical activity. Bowen and Kisida (2023) found that increased arts educational experiences improved students' writing achievement, emotional empathy, school engagement, and discipline-related outcomes, showing that creative learning contributes to broader academic and socio-emotional development. Similarly, Loturco et al. (2022) reported that school-based physical activity interventions may support academic achievement in areas such as mathematics, language, reading, and composite performance. These studies help explain why integrative MAPEH instruction may have produced stronger developmental outcomes in the present study. By combining artistic, physical, and health-oriented experiences, learners were not only acquiring subject knowledge but also practicing self-expression, bodily coordination, cooperation, attention, discipline, and decision-making. These competencies are essential to holistic development and may explain why the integrative group performed better than the non-integrative group.

The moderately high extent of integrative implementation indicates that teachers were already applying interdisciplinary strategies, but that full implementation still requires institutional and professional support. This finding is consistent with Didulo (2023), who reported that MAPEH teachers' technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge remains an important basis for instructional improvement and intervention planning. It also supports Tonnetti and Lentillon-Kaestner's (2023) observation that while interdisciplinarity is widely valued, authentic integration in secondary schools remains limited and requires favorable teaching conditions. Therefore, the present study implies that teacher capacity-building, collaborative planning, access to learning

resources, and curriculum-aligned performance tasks are necessary to strengthen integrative MAPEH instruction. Without these supports, integration may remain dependent on individual teacher initiative rather than becoming a sustained instructional practice across schools.

Finally, the higher academic performance of students exposed to integrative MAPEH and the moderate positive correlation between implementation extent and academic performance suggest that integrative instruction may contribute to broader academic outcomes. Reeve et al. (2025) explained that student engagement has different dimensions, with behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement serving important functions in achievement, motivation, social support, and well-being. In the present study, integrative MAPEH likely increased learners' participation, interest, effort, and cognitive investment, which may have supported academic performance beyond the MAPEH classroom. However, the correlation should be interpreted cautiously because it indicates association rather than direct causation. Other factors such as teacher quality, learner motivation, home support, prior achievement, and school resources may also influence performance. Even with this limitation, the results provide meaningful evidence that integrative MAPEH instruction is associated with improved engagement, holistic development, and academic achievement. The findings therefore justify the development of pedagogical guidelines that promote interdisciplinary lesson planning, collaborative performance tasks, health-and-arts integration, reflective learning, and continuous teacher professional development.

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