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Lived Pedagogical Experiences of MAPEH Teachers in Teaching Grade 7 Learners: Instructional Practices, Classroom Challenges, and Learner Engagement in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored the lived pedagogical experiences of MAPEH teachers in teaching Grade 7 learners at Gamau Agri-Fishery School. Specifically, the study examined teachers' instructional practices, classroom challenges, and learner engagement experiences in MAPEH education. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study involved purposively selected MAPEH teachers handling Grade 7 classes. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that teachers utilized contextualized and learner-centered pedagogical strategies, including collaborative learning, differentiated instruction, performance-based activities, and multimedia-assisted teaching. Participants emphasized that experiential and interactive activities enhanced learner participation and interest in MAPEH classes. However, teachers encountered challenges related to limited instructional resources, large class sizes, time constraints, varying learner abilities, and inadequate facilities for music, arts, physical education, and health instruction. Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated instructional adaptability and commitment in fostering meaningful learner engagement. The study highlights the importance of institutional support, resource provision, and sustained professional development programs to strengthen MAPEH instruction in public secondary schools.

Keywords: MAPEH education, pedagogical experiences, learner engagement, instructional practices, classroom challenges, qualitative inquiry

Introduction

The teaching of Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) plays a significant role in promoting holistic learner development in secondary education. MAPEH education contributes not only to learners' cognitive growth but also to their physical, emotional, social, artistic, and health-related competencies. Through MAPEH instruction, learners develop creativity, self-expression, physical fitness, teamwork, cultural appreciation, and healthy lifestyle practices that are essential for lifelong learning and personal development.

In the Philippine educational context, MAPEH teachers are expected to implement learner-centered and competency-based instructional approaches aligned with the K to 12 curriculum. The interdisciplinary nature of MAPEH requires teachers to demonstrate versatility in teaching multiple content areas, including music, visual arts, physical education, and health education. Consequently, MAPEH teachers encounter complex pedagogical demands that require instructional creativity, classroom adaptability, and effective learner engagement strategies.

Teaching Grade 7 learners presents unique pedagogical challenges because learners are transitioning from elementary to secondary education. During this developmental stage, learners experience adjustments in academic expectations, social interactions, emotional behaviors, and classroom responsibilities. MAPEH teachers play a critical role in facilitating engaging learning environments that accommodate learners' developmental needs and diverse learning styles.

The implementation of interactive and experiential pedagogical practices has become increasingly important in MAPEH education. Teachers utilize collaborative learning activities, demonstrations, performance-based tasks, games, multimedia resources, and contextualized instruction to improve learner engagement and participation. Experiential learning theory proposed by David Kolb emphasizes that learners develop understanding through concrete experiences, reflection, and active participation. Similarly, constructivist theory by Lev Vygotsky highlights the importance of social interaction and collaborative learning in knowledge construction.

Despite the importance of MAPEH education, several challenges continue to affect instructional delivery in public secondary schools. Existing studies have identified issues related to inadequate instructional materials, insufficient facilities, overcrowded classrooms, limited teacher specialization, and varying learner motivation. These challenges affect the quality of instruction and teachers' ability to sustain meaningful learner engagement in MAPEH classes.

Although numerous studies have examined pedagogical practices in core academic subjects, limited qualitative inquiries have explored the lived instructional experiences of MAPEH teachers, particularly in rural and public secondary school contexts. Understanding teachers' lived experiences provides deeper insights into the realities of MAPEH instruction, classroom management practices, instructional adaptability, and learner engagement strategies.

Hence, this study explored the lived pedagogical experiences of MAPEH teachers in teaching Grade 7 learners at Gamu Agri-Fishery School. Specifically, it examined instructional practices, classroom challenges, and learner engagement experiences in MAPEH education.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to explore the lived pedagogical experiences of MAPEH teachers in teaching Grade 7 learners. Specifically, it sought to:

1. examine the instructional practices utilized by MAPEH teachers in teaching Grade 7 learners;
2. explore the classroom challenges encountered by MAPEH teachers during instruction;
3. determine teachers' experiences regarding learner engagement in MAPEH classes; and
4. identify the coping mechanisms and instructional adaptations employed by teachers in addressing classroom challenges.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore and understand the lived pedagogical experiences of MAPEH teachers in teaching Grade 7 learners.

Participants and Locale of the Study

The participants consisted of eight purposively selected MAPEH teachers from Gamu Agri-Fishery School. Participants

were selected based on their teaching experience in handling Grade 7 MAPEH classes.

Data Collection Procedure

Semi-structured interviews were utilized to gather in-depth information regarding teachers' instructional practices, classroom experiences, learner engagement strategies, and encountered challenges. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and audio-recorded with participants' consent.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework of Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke. Thematic coding, categorization, and interpretation were conducted to identify recurring patterns and themes.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles including voluntary participation, confidentiality, informed consent, anonymity, and respect for participants' rights throughout the research process.

Results and Findings

Theme 1: Learner-Centered and Experiential Pedagogical Practices

Participants consistently described the implementation of learner-centered and experiential pedagogical approaches in teaching Grade 7 MAPEH classes. Teachers emphasized the importance of engaging learners through collaborative learning activities, demonstrations, role-playing, group performances, hands-on exercises, and interactive classroom tasks. Participants explained that these instructional strategies enabled learners to become more actively involved in the learning process rather than remaining passive recipients of information.

One participant shared:

“Mas natututo ang learners kapag may actual performances at group activities.”

Another teacher explained:

“Interactive activities make MAPEH lessons more enjoyable and meaningful for learners.”

Participants highlighted that experiential learning activities encouraged active participation, creativity, confidence, and cooperation among learners. Teachers observed that learners became more enthusiastic when lessons involved actual demonstrations, dance performances, music presentations, physical activities, and creative arts tasks. Participants further explained that experiential activities provided learners with opportunities to apply concepts in real-life contexts, thereby improving understanding and retention of lessons.

Several teachers also emphasized the effectiveness of collaborative learning practices in promoting peer interaction and social learning. Group performances, pair activities, and cooperative exercises allowed learners to develop teamwork, communication, and leadership skills while participating in classroom tasks. Teachers observed that shy and less confident learners gradually became more participative when involved in collaborative and performance-based activities.

One participant remarked:

“Kapag group activities, mas nagiging confident ang learners kasi nagtutulungan sila.”

Another teacher stated:

“Mas active ang klase kapag may role-playing at demonstration activities.”

Participants likewise noted that demonstrations and visual presentations improved learners' comprehension of abstract concepts in music, arts, physical education, and health education. Teachers explained that visual and practical activities made lessons more relatable and understandable, particularly for learners with diverse learning styles.

The findings indicate that learner-centered pedagogical practices promote meaningful engagement, creativity, collaboration, and active participation among Grade 7 learners. Experiential learning strategies create dynamic classroom environments where learners become more motivated and interested in MAPEH instruction. These findings support the experiential learning theory of David Kolb, which emphasizes that knowledge is developed through concrete experiences, active participation, and reflective learning processes. Likewise, the findings align with the constructivist perspective of Lev Vygotsky, which highlights the significance of social interaction and collaborative learning in knowledge construction.

Theme 2: Challenges in Instructional Delivery and Classroom Management

Participants identified numerous instructional and classroom management challenges affecting the effective teaching of Grade 7 MAPEH classes. Teachers consistently described difficulties related to limited instructional materials, inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient equipment, time constraints, and varying learner behaviors. These challenges significantly affected instructional delivery, classroom organization, and learner participation.

One participant stated:

“Mahirap magturo ng PE kapag kulang ang equipment at maliit ang space.”

Another teacher shared:

“Large class sizes make classroom management difficult during performance activities.”

Participants emphasized that inadequate facilities and limited resources restricted the implementation of interactive and performance-based learning activities. Teachers explained that some classrooms lacked proper spaces for dance presentations, physical activities, and music performances. Participants also noted the absence of sufficient sports equipment, musical instruments, visual aids, and multimedia resources necessary for effective MAPEH instruction.

Several teachers expressed concerns regarding overcrowded classrooms, which made it difficult to monitor learner participation and behavior during group activities and physical exercises. Participants explained that managing large groups during movement-based activities often resulted in noise, distractions, and safety concerns.

One teacher explained:

“Mahihirapan kang i-manage ang learners kapag masyadong marami lalo na sa physical activities.”

Participants further highlighted challenges associated with varying learner abilities and levels of participation. Teachers observed that some learners demonstrated low interest, lack of confidence, and reluctance to participate in performances and physical activities. Others experienced difficulties in following instructions and maintaining discipline during interactive classroom tasks.

Another participant shared:

“May learners na nahihiya magperform kaya kailangan talagang i-encourage sila.”

Teachers likewise emphasized time limitations as a challenge in teaching the four components of MAPEH within limited instructional periods. Participants explained that balancing discussions, demonstrations, activities, and assessments within short class periods became difficult, particularly when preparing learners for performances and practical activities. The findings suggest that institutional and resource limitations significantly affect the implementation of effective MAPEH instruction in public secondary schools. Classroom management difficulties, inadequate instructional facilities, and limited teaching resources hinder teachers' ability to maximize experiential and collaborative learning activities. These findings support existing literature emphasizing that resource inadequacies and overcrowded classrooms negatively affect learner engagement and instructional effectiveness.

Theme 3: Enhancing Learner Engagement Through Interactive Activities

Participants consistently perceived that interactive and performance-based activities enhanced learner engagement, participation, and motivation in Grade 7 MAPEH classes. Teachers observed that learners became more enthusiastic, attentive, and participative when lessons incorporated games, movement activities, collaborative tasks, creative performances, and multimedia-assisted instruction.

One teacher remarked:

“Learners participate more actively when activities are fun and interactive.”

Another participant explained:

“Performance tasks increase learners' confidence and teamwork.”

Participants emphasized that learners demonstrated greater interest in lessons involving actual participation rather than purely lecture-based instruction. Teachers explained that movement-oriented and creative activities encouraged learners to express themselves freely while developing communication, cooperation, and social interaction skills.

Several participants noted that interactive instructional strategies reduced learner boredom and improved classroom participation. Activities such as dance presentations, group singing, art-making projects, sports drills, health demonstrations, and role-playing tasks created enjoyable and engaging classroom experiences that sustained learner

attention and motivation.

One participant stated:

“Kapag may games at performances, mas focused at masaya ang learners.”

Teachers further observed that interactive activities helped improve learners’ confidence and self-esteem. Participants explained that performance-based tasks allowed learners to showcase their talents, abilities, and creativity while receiving encouragement from peers and teachers.

Another teacher shared:

“Nagiging confident sila kapag naipapakita nila ang kanilang talents sa class.”

Participants likewise highlighted that collaborative and experiential activities strengthened peer relationships and teamwork among learners. Through group tasks and classroom performances, learners developed interpersonal skills, responsibility, cooperation, and mutual respect.

The findings reveal that learner engagement in MAPEH education is strengthened through interactive, collaborative, and experiential instructional practices that accommodate learners’ interests and developmental characteristics. Interactive activities create positive learning environments that encourage participation, creativity, and active involvement in classroom tasks. These findings align with learner-centered educational approaches emphasizing active participation, meaningful experiences, and collaborative learning processes in enhancing student engagement and motivation.

Theme 4: Instructional Adaptability and Teacher Commitment

Despite the instructional and classroom challenges encountered, participants demonstrated strong adaptability, resilience, and commitment in sustaining effective MAPEH instruction. Teachers explained that they continuously improvised instructional materials, modified activities, utilized locally available resources, and adjusted teaching approaches based on classroom conditions and learner needs.

One participant shared:

“We improvise materials when resources are limited.”

Another teacher stated:

“Teachers need to be flexible and creative in handling different learner behaviors.”

Participants emphasized that creativity and resourcefulness were essential in addressing resource limitations and maintaining learner engagement. Teachers described using recycled materials, improvised sports equipment, locally available art materials, and alternative classroom spaces to facilitate learning activities despite inadequate facilities.

One teacher explained:

“Kahit kulang ang materials, gumagawa kami ng paraan para matuloy ang activities.”

Participants also highlighted the importance of patience, understanding, and emotional support in handling Grade 7 learners. Teachers observed that learners possessed varying personalities, interests, maturity levels, and learning behaviors that required individualized attention and flexible instructional approaches.

Several teachers explained that they adapted activities according to learners’ interests and abilities to encourage participation and inclusivity. Participants modified instructional strategies to ensure that hesitant and less confident learners could participate comfortably in classroom activities.

Another participant shared:

“Ina-adjust namin ang activities depende sa capability at confidence ng learners.”

Teachers further emphasized their commitment to creating positive and supportive classroom environments despite workload pressures and instructional challenges. Participants expressed dedication to helping learners develop not only academic competencies but also creativity, discipline, teamwork, and self-confidence.

The findings suggest that teacher resilience, adaptability, and commitment play significant roles in sustaining quality MAPEH instruction in public secondary schools. Teachers’ ability to improvise, innovate, and adjust instructional practices enables them to maintain meaningful learner engagement despite institutional and resource-related constraints. These findings highlight the important role of teacher professionalism and instructional flexibility in promoting effective and inclusive classroom experiences.

Discussion

The findings revealed that MAPEH teachers implement learner-centered and experiential pedagogical practices that promote active participation, creativity, and collaborative learning among Grade 7 learners. Teachers utilized performance-based activities, demonstrations, group tasks, and interactive classroom exercises to facilitate meaningful learning experiences. These findings support constructivist and experiential learning theories which emphasize active learner involvement and social interaction in knowledge construction.

The study further revealed that learner engagement was enhanced through interactive and collaborative instructional approaches. Teachers observed increased learner motivation, participation, confidence, and classroom interaction during experiential activities. These findings suggest that engaging and contextualized pedagogical strategies positively influence learners' interest and participation in MAPEH education.

However, the study also identified significant instructional challenges affecting classroom implementation. Limited facilities, insufficient instructional resources, overcrowded classrooms, and time constraints hindered effective instructional delivery and classroom management. These findings align with existing literature emphasizing resource limitations and institutional constraints in public school settings.

Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated strong instructional adaptability and commitment by improvising materials, modifying activities, and utilizing contextualized teaching strategies. The findings underscore the importance of teacher resilience and pedagogical creativity in sustaining effective learner engagement in resource-constrained environments.

Conclusion

The study explored the lived pedagogical experiences of MAPEH teachers in teaching Grade 7 learners at Gamu Agri-Fishery School. Findings revealed that teachers employ learner-centered, experiential, and interactive instructional practices that enhance learner participation and engagement in MAPEH classes.

Teachers perceived that collaborative activities, demonstrations, and performance-based tasks improve learners' motivation, creativity, confidence, and classroom interaction. However, instructional challenges related to inadequate facilities, limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and varying learner abilities affect the implementation of effective MAPEH instruction.

Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated instructional adaptability, creativity, and commitment by utilizing improvised materials and contextualized teaching approaches. The study concludes that teacher resilience and learner-centered pedagogical practices play vital roles in sustaining meaningful learner engagement in MAPEH education.

Implications of the Study

The findings of the study provide important implications for educational leaders, school administrators, and curriculum planners. Schools may strengthen institutional support for MAPEH education through the provision of adequate instructional materials, facilities, multimedia resources, and performance spaces.

Professional development programs focusing on learner-centered pedagogy, classroom management, and experiential teaching strategies may further enhance teachers' instructional competencies. Schools may likewise encourage collaborative planning and resource-sharing among MAPEH teachers to strengthen instructional innovation and creativity.

The study also highlights the importance of promoting supportive and engaging classroom environments that encourage learner participation, creativity, and holistic development. Future researchers may conduct similar studies in other educational contexts to further explore the pedagogical experiences of MAPEH teachers and learner engagement practices.

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