

Physical Education and Health Education, Is it a Neglected Subject?

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Abstract

The main objective of Physical Education and Health Education (PEHE) subject that has been taught in school is to develop knowledgeable, skilled, and value-oriented students with a positive attitude. Further, PEHE is also important in promoting a healthy lifestyles among students'. These subjects are mandatory subject that is taught in schools. The goals of Physical Education and Health Education are in line with the objectives of education, which aim to produce a holistic students in terms of physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. Unfortunately, this subject often face challenges from society and even teachers themselves especially on the importance of it. Thus, challenges in regards to these issues and suggestions will be discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Physical Education and Health Education

Introduction

The Philosophy of National Education is the cornerstone of the Malaysian education system. In line with this, education is an ongoing effort to develop a holistic and integrated potential of individuals to produce well-balanced and harmonious individuals in terms of intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects, based on belief and obedience to God. This effort aims to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable, skilled, morally upright, responsible, and capable of achieving personal well-being and contributing to the harmony and prosperity of family, society, and the nation.

The philosophy of national and secondary education has been reintegrated, emphasizing knowledge, skills, and self-identity enhancement to face current and future challenges. The teaching and learning process needs to be enhanced to effectively meet the country's requirements. This updated curriculum places emphasis on learning content and more effective teaching methods (Curriculum Review, 2017). The Standard Curriculum and Assessment Document (Dokumen Standard Kurikulum dan Pentaksiran, DSKP) for Physical Education and Health Education (Curriculum Development Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2016) outlines the development of the subjects of Physical Education and Health Education to meet the requirements of the National Education Philosophy which is holistic, integrated, and genuine. Physical Education and Health Education prioritize personal development in various aspects, including the physical, mental, emotional, social, and safety domains, as well as personal responsibility, interaction, and cooperation. The curriculum of

this subject is based on movement skills and healthy lifestyle practices through the psychomotor, cognitive, and affective domains, implemented modularly according to the needs of students, consisting of the Physical Education Component and the Health Education Component. The knowledge from these fields, encompassing cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains, needs to be effectively delivered through various engaging and relevant approaches, methods, and techniques to meet the demands of the 21st century. Higher-Order Thinking Skills (KBAT), 21st Century Learning (PAK21), integrated approaches, contextual learning, and the application of multiple intelligences theory should be applied. To produce high-quality human capital in line with curriculum development, a student must master problem-solving skills, make accurate decision-making, and acquire high-level leadership skills. Hence, this concept paper will delve into the extent of the perception of the subjects of Physical Education and Health Education in Malaysia. Various challenges that teachers must overcome to counter the views of students, fellow teachers, administrators, and parents in elevating the status of these subjects will be discussed.

The Importance of Physical Education and Health Education

The Ministry of Education Malaysia has taken steps to include it as a compulsory core subject in schools at all levels through the Education Act 1996 (Act 550). The Ministry of Education Malaysia has also issued Special Circulars Number 3/1979; Number 2/1988; Number 17/1998; Number 25/1998; and Number 8/1990 (Implementation of Physical Education and Health Education) to inform all school principals and classroom teachers that Physical Education must be practiced during school hours. Schools prohibit the use of time allocated for physical education to teach other subjects.

According to the Standard Curriculum and Assessment Document for Secondary Schools (2016), the health education curriculum focuses on Skills-Based Health Education, which includes psychosocial competence skills to enable students to acquire information, develop attitudes, and maintain a healthy lifestyle or habits. This encompasses skills, including moral values, various learning experiences, and an emphasis on participation methods. Psychosocial skills refer to an individual's ability to effectively handle daily demands and challenges, including the ability to maintain good mental states and exhibit positive behaviour. It also includes behaviours during interactions with individuals from diverse cultures and environments. Enhancing the quality of health and well-being is a component of psychosocial skills. Among these components are decision-making, problem-solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, emotional management, and stress management.

According to Oliviera et al (2017), the regular implementation of Physical Education can have a positive impact on student behavior. A study involving 240 children aged 10 to 11 in the Rondonia region of Brazil found that the use of team sports reduced physical aggression by 100% and verbal bullying by 85.7%. According to Roliak (2020), sports provide excellent opportunities for everyone to learn and practice motor skills that enhance lifelong fitness and physical health. In Indonesia, according to Putra (2019), the implementation of Physical Education is considered a common concept. Sports emphasize physical fitness, entertainment, leisure, and improve the quality of human life. As reported by Haqiyah (2018), Physical Education in Japan focuses on improving health, character, movement abilities, and social skills through various teaching methods. The learning process involves a greater

emphasis on imitating movements and standard techniques initially demonstrated by instructors. These movements are repeated until they become automatic responses. In contrast, physical education in China aims to enhance health, personality, movement abilities, and social intelligence through goal-oriented teaching methods and activities (Fikri, 2019). Furthermore, physical education able to enhance students' ability self-concepts, task values, learning objectives, and accomplishment motives (Steinmayr et al., 2019).

Issues in Physical Education and Health Education

Based on a literature review, previous studies conducted, both directly and indirectly, mostly discuss the importance of the subjects of Physical Education and Health Education.

1. Is the number of Physical Education and Health Education teachers sufficient in schools.

In schools, the subjects of Physical Education and Health Education are not typically taught by specialized Physical Education teachers. The placement of Physical Education and Health Education option teachers in schools is less than ideal. The school's reasoning is that these subjects do not require exam-oriented instruction and can, therefore, be taught by any teacher. However, many teachers are not interested in teaching these subjects. The shortage of specialized teachers for Physical Education and Health Education options is concerning, especially because the teaching approach emphasizes play.

Furthermore, studies indicate that teachers' competence in implementing School-Based Assessment (PBS) for Physical Education activities like SEGAK and PAJSK is low, even though it was implemented in 2011. According to a qualitative study conducted by Veloo and Md. Ali (2016) on Physical Education teachers in Kedah, the mastery of assessment aspects is not fully achieved due to factors such as information fluidity, short training periods, and the failure of department heads or representatives attending courses to relay information through in-house training to schoolteachers.

According to Circular Letter Ikhtisas Bil. 3/1999, the preparation of Teaching and Learning Records by all subject teachers in daily lesson planning must be adhered. According to the Ministry of Education (KPM) in 2019, monitoring the implementation of the National Physical Fitness Standard Test (SEGAK) according to the procedures stipulated in Circular Letter Ikhtisas Bil. 2/2016: National Physical Fitness Standard for Malaysian School Students (SEGAK) for new and non-specialized option teachers needs to be emphasized. This clearly indicates the importance of mastering the content and curriculum changes. Dissemination courses should be provided directly to the target groups.

The head of the committee plays a role in planning, implementing, coordinating, monitoring, evaluating, and improving all matters related to the subject. An individual is appointed as the head of the subject committee based on the teacher's option, knowledge, and endorsement by the administration, with the aim of leading the subject teachers under their responsibility. The membership of the subject committee should consist of all teachers who teach the subject in the school. The requirements for establishing subject committees are outlined in Circular Letter Ikhtisas Bil. 4/1986: Subject Committees (KPM, 2019).

Issue 2: Is the allocation of teaching time for Physical Education and Health Education managed optimally?

The Ministry of Education Malaysia does not allocate an adequate amount of time for Physical Education and Health Education subjects, even though these subjects involve physical movement activities in sports and educate students during Physical Education and Health Education classes, especially leading up to examinations.

The implementation of Physical Education (PdP Pendidikan Jasmani) in primary schools is in line with Circular Letter Ikhtisas Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia Bilangan 8 Tahun 2016: Implementation of the Primary School Standard Curriculum (2017 Revision) Gradually Starting from 2017 (Annex 12). A minimum of 48 hours per year is allocated for Physical Education and Health Education subjects. The distribution of time is as follows: 32 hours per year for Physical Education (PJ) and 16 hours per year for Health Education (PK). The timetable is arranged for Physical Education classes, with each session lasting 30 minutes and held on alternate days within a week, while Health Education classes are conducted for 30 minutes per teaching and learning session. Sessions for Physical Education and Health Education cannot be combined.

In line with Circular Letter Ikhtisas Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia Bilangan 9 Tahun 2016: Implementation of the Secondary School Standard Curriculum Gradually Starting from 2017 (Annex 7), the minimum allocation of time for Physical Education and Health Education in secondary schools for teaching and learning is 64 hours per year. Physical Education should be taught for 48 hours per year, while Health Education is allocated 26 hours per year. The timetable for Physical Education and Health Education is organized as two hours per week. Based on the curriculum content and time allocation, Physical Education will be taught for three hours, while Health Education is allocated one hour every two weeks, on alternate days within a week.

As for the Transition Classes, the implementation of teaching and learning for Physical Education and Health Education aligns with the latest specialized circular, Circular Letter Ikhtisas Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia Bilangan 2 Tahun 2019: Implementation of the Transition Class Standard Curriculum in Secondary Schools Starting from 2019 (Annex 3), which sets a minimum time allocation of 64 hours per year for Physical Education and Health Education subjects. A total of 48 hours per year is designated for Physical Education (PJ), while Health Education (PK) amounts to 16 hours per year. Two hours per week are scheduled for the teaching of Physical Education and Health Education, every two weeks on alternate days within a week, based on the curriculum content and time allocation.

As outlined in the Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013 – 2025, effective curriculum implementation at the school level is crucial in ensuring the development of holistic human capital that fulfills six student aspirations. Therefore, schools need to efficiently mobilize the School Curriculum Committee to enhance the success of student development. Effective, systematic, and efficient management will result in enjoyable and high-impact teaching and learning (PdP) for students, as per Circular Letter No. 5/2019: Strengthening the Operation of School Curriculum Committees dated January 11, 2019 (KPM, 2019).

A physical education program typically consists of physical conditioning, posture, gymnastics, games and sports, rhythmic gymnastics, and dance activities performed in primary schools. According to Pahliwandari (2019), it differs from secondary education in that the emphasis is on physical conditioning, gymnastics, sports events (races and field events), games and sports, swimming, and lifesaving, with a slight emphasis on dance, particularly for

girls. Both boys and girls are encouraged to participate in sports and games both inside and outside the classroom. Sports that require strength are also included for girls to participate in. To complement physical education classes, afternoon exercise sessions (evening sports), morning training sessions (morning guidance sessions), or sports days are organized, allowing participation at different levels or grades each week.

Issue 3: To what extent do parents perceive the subjects of Physical Education and Health Education?

There are various assumptions among parents regarding the subjects of Physical Education and Health Education. They consider these subjects a waste of time because students are already required to participate in other co-curricular activities outside of learning hours. Parents believe that only exam-based subjects should receive attention, even though there are (2018). Students may provide reasons to avoid exercising.

According to the Malaysia Education Development Plan 2013-2025 concerning student learning, to produce skilled and internationally competitive students, teaching and learning should encompass curricula and assessments based on international standards. Improvements in the examination-oriented assessment system are necessary to ensure the direction of education that is based on assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning and aligned with holistic student development.

To fulfill the National Education Philosophy, School-Based Assessment is developed from the beginning to the end of schooling and is not solely focused on intellectual development but assesses the holistic potential of students. Both academic and non-academic domains are components of School-Based Assessment. School Assessment and Central Assessment fall under the academic domain, while Physical Education, Sports, and Co-Curricular Activity Assessment (PAJSK) and Psychometric Assessment (PPsi) belong to the non-academic domain, as stated in the Examination Board Circular Letter No. 3 of 2011: Information on PBS in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools (KP.LP.003.07.14.05(1)) dated July 29, 2011 (KPM).

Issue 4: What are the potential risks and hazards that students may face during the teaching and learning of Physical Education?

Physical Education involves physical activities, which can expose students to the risk of injuries. According to Wee Eng Hoe (1994), understanding safety aspects in Physical Education is crucial in preventing injuries to students through better teaching methods or exercises. To prevent unwanted incidents, teachers need to play an effective role. There have been cases of injuries during the process of teaching and learning Physical Education due to teachers lacking in-depth knowledge about the activities conducted. Safety guidelines for the management of the Physical Education and Health Education subject by every Physical Education teacher should be emphasized to enhance safety levels before, during, and after conducting Physical Education and Health Education activities (SPI. Bil 5/2016: Safety Guidelines During the Teaching of Physical Education and Health Education and Co-Curricular and Sports Activities Inside and Outside the School Area) to reduce the risk of injuries (KPM).

Issue 5: How well do school administrators support the subjects of Physical Education and Health Education?

Academic achievement is the main focus of school administrators. There are a few administrators who use the subjects of Physical Education and Health Education to teach other examination subjects. Students, especially those in exam years, may not engage in physical activities as they prioritize achieving excellence in their exams. Only on paper or in the timetable, the subjects of Physical Education and Health Education are listed, but they are replaced with core subjects like Bahasa Melayu, Mathematics, and Science in an effort to improve exam performance. Furthermore, administrators should provide recognition to schools, principals or headmasters, teachers, coaches, and students. Administrators should make the management guidelines for Physical Education and Health Education subjects as guidelines to facilitate effective supervision and monitoring in the field of management and teaching of Physical Education and Health Education (SPI. KPM BIL. 8/2016: Primary School Standard Curriculum (2017 Revision) Gradually Starting from 2017 and SPI. KPM BIL. 9/2016: Implementation of the Secondary School Standard Curriculum Gradually Starting from 2017).

Meanwhile, Principals and Headmasters ensure that the Head of the Physical Education and Health Education Committee (Ketua Panitia PJK) effectively manages and administers the committee in accordance with SPI. BIL. 4/1986: Management of Subject Committees. The involvement of administrators in generating ideas for school management, committee heads, and teachers teaching Physical Education and Health Education subjects on how to enhance mastery and performance in Physical Education and Health Education at school should be implemented (SPI. BIL. 1/2014: School-Based Assessment) (KPM, 2019).

Suggestions

Educators, especially teachers, play a vital role in shaping human capital. Therefore, at the school level, the Ministry of Education Malaysia has taken several steps that need to be undertaken by program planners to develop the subjects of Physical Education and Health Education. Every layer within the organization needs to understand their roles in enhancing Physical Education and Health Education. In line with the Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2021-2025, starting from the third wave, all schools, teachers, principals, or headmasters must demonstrate performance exceeding minimum standards. Therefore, to foster a culture of collaborative leadership for teacher professional development, the ministry will focus on improving operational efficiency. The ministry aims to transform most schools into school-based management models and develop school success models based on innovation in teaching and learning. The goal is to develop a self-improvement maintenance system capable of generating innovation and achieving higher performance (PPPM).

1. Administrative Management

The school's organizational leader, consisting of the Principal or Headmaster, acts as the planner, leader, implementer of curriculum changes, and innovator to ensure the development of holistic human capital as outlined in the Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025. Efficient school administration management is the catalyst for overall student excellence and development. Effective school administrative management, especially that of the School Curriculum Committee (JKS), will yield enjoyable and high-impact teaching and learning experiences for students, as per Circular Letter No. 5/2019: Strengthening the Operation of the School Curriculum Committee dated January 11, 2019 (PPK, KPM, 2001).

Furthermore, the role of the Principal or Headmaster includes being the determiner of elective subjects, planning and managing the teaching and learning program, ensuring

adequate teaching, and learning resources, and serving as a role model in elevating teaching professionalism. The principal also needs to pay attention to school resources, manpower, and physical facilities, besides conducting regular teaching and learning observations to ensure the quality of teaching and learning provided by teachers. Meanwhile, the Assistant Principal or Afternoon Assistant Principal is responsible for preparing the master timetable, class schedules, substitute teacher schedules, and determining the number of teachers based on the suitability of options, staff development programs, planning, implementing, and evaluating curriculum improvement programs, as well as guiding teachers from time to time. They also ensure that suitable teacher candidates attend courses related to their respective options. The Principal is also supported by Subject Senior Teachers in planning, implementing teaching and learning supervision, managing subject committees, ensuring the use of resources, time table management, special room management, conducting assessments, staff development, and systematically managing teaching aids and central resource collections.

2. Empowerment

Teachers and Allocation of Time for Physical Education and Health Education Qualified teachers should possess knowledge and experience in teaching methods, such as hockey, tennis, sepak takraw, and sports, which require proper knowledge and methods for effective instruction. Recognized physical education and health education teachers are also required to receive a minimum of 14 hours of teaching, as directed by the Ministry of Education Malaysia. Additionally, teachers need to be encouraged, motivated, and provided with more support in terms of recognition. Unfortunately, many school administrators focus only on physical education and health education teachers when assigning tasks but do not show appreciation, such as through Excellent Service Awards. This is a negative trend that can dampen the spirits of physical education and health education teachers.

3. Organizing Courses in PLC for Option Teachers and New Teachers on Communication (TMK) as well as Global Sustainability in PdP.

Furthermore, internal courses such as designing professional learning community programs like learning walks, peer tutoring, or instructional coaching, curriculum research, and teacher sharing sessions at the school, district, state, and national levels related to physical education and administration. Health education classes are rarely conducted. Therefore, it is recommended that school, district, and state administrators consistently organize courses, seminars, workshops, symposiums, and conferences related to this topic. Collaboration between universities and associations can assist in this regard. If there is a shortage of professional teachers, the need can be met by requesting the ministry to identify option teachers from universities such as the National University of Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris for placement.

Effective teaching strategies (PdP) that align with the skills being taught play a crucial role in making learning more enjoyable and tailored to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and abilities. The implementation of PdP also leads to the realization of 21st-century learning standards. Teachers engage students in the PdP process by applying communication, collaboration, problem-solving, analysis, ideas, reflection, innovation, and the creation of new things. PdP activities also emphasize student-centered learning and inquiry-based project work. Through a PdP process that emphasizes high-level thinking skills, students also develop creative and innovative thinking skills. Teachers should also incorporate elements of creativity and innovation, entrepreneurship, information and communication technology (ICT), and global sustainability into PdP. Teachers can apply mastery learning,

inquiry-based approaches in project-based and problem-based learning, exploration methods, the Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) approach, an integrated approach, Multiple Intelligence Theory applications, contextual learning, and other PdP strategies (Curriculum and Assessment Standard Document, 2016).

4. Parental Role

Parents can play a significant role in promoting the dignity of physical education subjects. Brain intelligence and physical fitness are important for producing well-rounded individuals in terms of spirituality, physicality, and intellect. Children should be encouraged to participate in physical education activities and not focus solely on academics. The National Physical Fitness Standard Test (SEGAK) that is conducted is a standardized physical fitness test battery to measure students' physical fitness levels based on health. The fitness components in SEGAK are included in the primary and secondary school Physical Education curricula. Health-based fitness components consist of cardiovascular endurance, muscle endurance, muscle strength, flexibility, and body composition (KPM, 2016). High levels of health-based fitness provide benefits to an individual in terms of good health, energy, and the ability to perform daily activities effectively.

5. Dangers in Physical Education

Physical education has many benefits for students in terms of physical health, mental well-being, and overall development. However, like other physical activities, there are several risks or dangers that teachers need to be aware of. It should be noted that the risks and dangers can be reduced and mitigated if supervision and early actions are taken. As teachers, it is important to identify students with health problems that may pose a risk of injury during activities, such as asthma, heart disease, or other dangerous conditions. Sports equipment and activity areas must be safe for conducting activities. Safety measures during physical education activities should be emphasized. According to Circular Bil. 1/1995: Student self-safety during physical education and health education teaching as well as cocurricular and sports activities within and outside the school area aim to alert all Physical Education and Sports teachers to be vigilant about potential circumstances that could lead to unwanted incidents for students and to take specific measures to prevent them. At all times, student safety should be a top priority for teachers.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Physical Education and Health Education curriculum must achieve the objectives set by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Various issues need to be dealt with immediately so as not to cause problems during the teaching and learning of Physical Education and Health Education. Responsible parties need to play an important role in raising the dignity of Physical Education and Health Education. Accordingly, teachers need to use various approaches and pedagogical knowledge so that the teaching and learning process is smoother and more perfect.

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