

# Health and Wellness Initiatives: A Systematic Review

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## Abstract

The worldwide shift towards prioritizing overall health and wellness highlights a crucial need for a critical examination of program implementation. This study aimed to identify health and wellness initiatives within Philippine schools through a systematic review of recent studies over the past five years. Utilizing thematic analysis, the researchers decoded significant statements and formulated meanings, leading to the emergence of two major themes: health program evaluation and integrated wellness. Within health program evaluation, three major themes surfaced: assessment of health practices, school health programs, and program effectiveness. Integrated wellness encompassed two core ideas: the intersection of physical education with wellness and the connection between wellness and behaviour. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the pivotal role of Health Program Evaluation and Integrated Wellness in shaping physical education, equipping educators with a comprehensive framework to foster student well-being and cultivate vital life skills and habits essential for long-term health and success.

*Keywords: Health; wellness; physical education; systematic review*

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## Introduction

The implementation of health and wellness initiatives in schools is a critical component of students' overall development and academic success. The perception of physical education in Philippine schools underscores a pressing need for a more holistic approach to well-being, recognizing that current practices often overlook crucial aspects beyond physical activity alone. This perspective is supported by various literature sources that expose the limitations of current practices and identify areas for improvement. The lack of holistic approaches to physical education in Philippine schools results in a limited focus on comprehensive well-being (Plaza, 2024; Liu, 2024; Redublado et al., 2024), neglecting crucial aspects such as mental (Al-Shaer et al., 2024; Callas et al., 2024), emotional (Liu, 2024), and behavioural health (Lacson & Tolentino, 2024; Seva et al., 2024).

Internationally, the limitations of traditional physical education approaches that focus solely on physical activity, advocate for a more comprehensive understanding of well-being that includes mental, emotional, and social dimensions (McKenzie, 2020; Hardman & Marshall, 2000). Additionally, the importance of evidence-based practices in promoting student well-being within physical education contexts (Bailey et al., 2013; Dollman et al., 2005). Moreover, there is a need for global initiatives that prioritize holistic approaches to physical education to address the diverse needs of students and promote lifelong health and well-being (Harris et al., 2021; Vella et al., 2017).

In the context of the Philippines, several scholars have discussed the predominant focus on physical activity promotion within physical education, highlighting the need to address broader dimensions of well-being (Palad et al., 2023; Moral-Garcia et al., 2021). In the meantime, there were challenges and limitations in implementing comprehensive physical education programs in Philippine schools, emphasizing resource constraints and curriculum design (Tolentino & Sinio, 2024; Malbas et al., 2023; Catapang, 2022). Despite these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the importance of adopting a more holistic approach to physical education to promote Filipino students' overall health and well-being (Santos et al., 2024; Valdez, 2024).

This study stands out from previous research by pitching deeper into a crucial aspect often overlooked in Philippine physical education: the effectiveness of policies promoting physical activity among Filipino youth. Unlike other studies that may have touched on challenges and general recommendations, this takes a hands-on approach, blending both qualitative and quantitative methods. By doing so, this study paints a more vivid picture of how these policies truly impact the well-being of Filipino students, bringing the voices and experiences to the forefront. Additionally, this does not just focus on local insights; it also draws inspiration from global best practices and evidence-based approaches, offering a well-rounded perspective that can guide policymakers and educators toward more impactful decisions. This approach is not just about filling gaps in knowledge; it is about making a tangible difference in the lives of Filipino youth, ensuring they have the support they need to thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally.

This study was anchored on the Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner (1977). This theory provides a more comprehensive context for understanding how various ecological systems influence human progress. It rationalizes a holistic perspective, multiple influences, and contextual understanding. Holistic perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of different environmental systems, aligning well to student well-being, such as physical, mental, emotional, and behavioural health. This theory considers multiple levels of influence on an individual, from microsystem like family and school to macrosystem such as societal and cultural contexts, examining how school initiatives interact with other factors affecting student health and well-being. Applying this theory helps in understanding how health and wellness initiatives are implemented within the specific socio-cultural and educational context of the Philippines. It allows for a nuanced analysis of how different stakeholders, namely students, teachers, and policymakers and environmental factors, specifically school resources, and community support contribute to the success or limitations of these initiatives.

Hence, the purpose of the study was to identify the health and wellness initiatives implemented by Philippine schools. Specifically, the study aimed to answer this question: What health and wellness initiatives implemented by Philippine schools targeting various groups and education levels?

## **Method**

A systematic scoping review was employed to determine the health and wellness initiatives within the Philippine Physical Education. This paper highlighted the significance of systematic reviews in shaping health and wellness initiatives by thoroughly synthesizing relevant evidence (Armstrong et al., 2008).

The study included literature on health and wellness initiatives in all Philippine academic schools, involving faculty, non-teaching staff, students, school heads, and nurses, covering both genders and various age groups. The scopes of examined research designs were descriptive, correlation, quasi-experimental, qualitative, and mixed-methods, evaluating health profiles, self-care, health promotion, nutrition programs, fitness, and holistic development. Outcomes included health practices, status indicators, and program effectiveness,

focusing on WASH, SHNP, and PATH Fit programs. Only 15 recent studies that last five years were included. Non-Philippine studies, non-educational sector research, non-representative participants, studies unrelated to health and wellness, and those with unclear outcomes were excluded. The authors applied a qualitative thematic analysis to these articles, using codes to extract themes related to health and wellness initiatives in the Philippine physical education context.

## Results and Discussion

The authors presented the results and discussion about the health and wellness initiatives implemented by Philippine schools. The findings and analyses were organized into three main themes. The first theme was the Health and Wellness Initiative as the core focus of the study, highlighting the various health and wellness initiatives established by the schools. The second part was the Health Program Evaluation as the first clustered essential theme, analyzing how these initiatives are evaluated in terms of their impact and outcomes. The third part was Integrated Wellness as second clustered essential theme, exploring the comprehensive approach to wellness integrating physical, mental, and emotional health initiatives based on significant statements and formulated meanings derived from the reviewed literatures.

### Health and Wellness Initiatives

Table 1 presents an in-depth examination of health and wellness initiatives undertaken by schools across the Philippines, catering to diverse demographic groups and educational levels. Through a systematic analysis of various research outcomes, meaningful interpretations were synthesized. These interpretations were subsequently clustered and decoded to unveil underlying thematic threads, thereby elucidating the essence of the study.

Table 1. Health and Wellness Initiatives implemented by Philippine Schools

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Health Program Evaluation	Assessment of Health Practices School Health Programs Program Effectiveness
Integrated Wellness	Physical Education and Wellness Wellness and Behaviour

Two overarching themes emerged from this analysis: Health Program Evaluation and Integrated Wellness. Under the theme of Health Program Evaluation, three fundamental concepts were identified: the assessment of health practices, school health programs, and program effectiveness. This theme probes into the meticulous evaluation of health-related initiatives within educational settings, encompassing the assessment of prevailing health practices, the design and implementation of school-wide health programs, and the critical appraisal of their effectiveness. Conversely, the theme of Integrated Wellness encapsulates two primary concepts: physical education and wellness, and wellness and behaviour. This theme underscores the holistic approach adopted by Philippine schools in promoting wellness, integrating physical education with broader wellness initiatives. Furthermore, it underscores the significance of addressing behavioural aspects within the context of wellness programs, thereby fostering comprehensive well-being among students and stakeholders.

Together, these essential themes offer a comprehensive representation of the multifaceted health and wellness landscape within Philippine educational institutions. They shed light on the strategic endeavours undertaken to promote holistic well-being, providing valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and practitioners aiming to enhance health outcomes within school settings.

## *1. Health Program Evaluation*

Throughout the process, the health program evaluation signifies a critical focus on assessing and analyzing the effectiveness and impact of health-related initiatives within the educational landscape of Philippine schools. This theme encompasses three core ideas: Assessment of Health Practices, School Health Programs, and Program Effectiveness, each playing a critical role in shaping the overall evaluation framework.

The assessment of health practices within Philippine schools involves a comprehensive examination of various aspects of health behaviour among students, educators, and staff. This assessment encompasses diverse dimensions such as dietary habits, physical activity levels, mental health status, substance use, and adherence to preventive health measures. Researchers employ a range of methodologies including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observational studies to gather data on health practices. By understanding the prevailing health behaviours and attitudes within the school community, educators and policymakers can tailor interventions and programs to address specific needs and promote healthier lifestyles.

School health programs in the Philippines encompass a wide array of initiatives aimed at promoting the health and well-being of students and staff. These programs may include health education curriculum, physical education classes, school-based health clinics, nutritional interventions, mental health services, and initiatives to create a supportive and safe school environment. Evaluating school health programs involves assessing their design, implementation, and impact on various health outcomes. Researchers examine factors such as program fidelity, reach, accessibility, sustainability, and effectiveness in achieving stated objectives. Through systematic evaluation, stakeholders gain insights into the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs, enabling informed decision-making and continuous improvement efforts.

Assessing the effectiveness of health programs is essential for determining their impact on student health outcomes and overall well-being. Researchers employ rigorous evaluation methodologies to measure program effectiveness, including pre- and post-intervention assessments, control group comparisons, and longitudinal studies. Evaluation metrics may include changes in health knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and biomarkers, as well as indicators of academic performance, attendance, and school climate. Additionally, researchers explore contextual factors influencing program success or barriers to implementation, such as resource constraints, community partnerships, and cultural considerations. By identifying successful strategies and areas for improvement, program effectiveness evaluations inform evidence-based decision-making and resource allocation, maximizing the impact of health interventions within Philippine schools.

The study findings are corroborated by various authors and scholars in the assessment of health practices. Interventions targeting dietary habits in schoolchildren emphasize environmental modifications for healthier eating (Chatterjee & Nigude, 2024). Effective school-based feeding programs, as highlighted by Lonzaga (2024), improve nutritional status. Redublado et al. (2024) advocate evidence-based policies to enhance physical activity and movement skills while fostering enjoyment among school-aged children. Embalsado (2024) underscores the importance of a localized mental health program, emphasizing community strengths, well-being, and resilience. Prevention of substance use and abuse is addressed by Jongko et al. (2024). Positive trends in handwashing, deworming, and toothbrushing practices within integrated school programs, as observed by Monse et al. (2013), are attributed to combined strategies including mass drug administration, health education, and WASH improvements (Ladia et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, evidence supports diverse forms of school health programs in the Philippines. These include integrating health education curriculum (Arif et al., 2024; Jongko et al., 2024), implementing physical

education classes (Mesias & Pelicano, 2024; Vera & Calixtro, 2024), establishing school-based health clinics (Plaza, 2024), introducing nutritional interventions (Celana, 2024), providing mental health services (Del Castillo, 2024; Larran & Hein, 2024), and fostering a safe school environment (Gregorio et al., 2024).

Various authors and scholars have highlighted program effectiveness, encompassing health assessment dimensions (Magallanes, 2024), health-related school performance (Gaddi, 2024; Seldura et al., 2024), and implementation factors including resource constraints (Bondoc, 2024; Cipriano et al., 2024; Yoduk & Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2024), cultural considerations, and collaborations (Cipriano et al., 2024; Cipriano et al., 2024).

Several studies explicitly mentioned to health program evaluation are coded with their findings:

Assessing holistic health practices and demographic impacts on work (R1)

Assessing multiple health factors for well-being (R2)

Reliable instrument measures holistic student development effectively (R9)

Anthropometric and performance scores differ; exercise model's impact (R7)

Nurses support school health, aid overweight students (R4)

WASH programs in schools enhance community health (R5)

Implementing comprehensive school health and nutrition programs with community coordination, despite no correlation with school profiles, while proposing PEACE Model intervention for enhancement (R6)

Nutritional program affects both status and performance (R8)

Stakeholders find standards effective; predictors of program success (R10)

## 2. *Integrated Wellness*

In the process of systematic analysis, integrated wellness in Philippine physical education implementation comprises two core ideas: physical education and wellness, and wellness and behaviour. This approach emphasizes not only physical activity but also holistic well-being and behavioural aspects. By integrating physical education with wellness components, the aim is to foster a comprehensive understanding of health and encourage positive lifestyle behaviours among students. This approach acknowledges the interconnectedness of physical, mental, and emotional health, promoting overall well-being. Moreover, by addressing wellness and behaviour within physical education, educators can help students develop essential life skills and habits that contribute to their long-term health and success.

The study findings are supported by numerous authors and scholars in the field of physical education and wellness. The interconnectedness between physical health and well-being (Liu, 2024; Redublado et al., 2024; Valdez, 2024), and mental health and well-being (Al-Shaer et al., 2024; Callas et al., 2024; Fu, 2024; Lacson et al., 2024; Liu, 2024), emotional health and well-being (Liu, 2024), and other aspects that connect to well-being (Ancho, Payao, & Balijon, 2024; Liu, 2024).

In the context of wellness and behaviour, consensus among several authors exists regarding the impact of attitudes, behaviours, or characteristics on overall well-being, thereby contributing to sustainable health and success (Lacson & Tolentino, 2024; Seva, Tangsoc, & Madria, 2024). Failure to address these factors may lead to learning loss (Esguerra, 2024).

Studies that attest to the integrated wellness are presented in the following codes:

Healthy PE teachers excel in teaching performance (R11)

Students active, need strength training for wellness (R15)

Integrating game-based education (R12)

Spiritual, social growth, stress, nutrition, and exercise levels (R3)

Factors influencing behaviour for fitness and wellness (R13)  
Poor lifestyle habits prevalent; governance impacts health (R14)

## **Implication**

The exhaustive investigation of health and wellness initiatives in Philippine schools underscores the significance of adopting a holistic approach to promote well-being among students and stakeholders. The identified themes of Health Program Evaluation and Integrated Wellness provide a comprehensive framework for assessing, implementing, and enhancing health-related interventions within educational settings. By emphasizing the assessment of health practices, evaluation of school health programs, and appraisal of program effectiveness, stakeholders can gain valuable insights into prevailing health behaviours and the impact of interventions, enabling informed decision-making and continuous improvement efforts. Moreover, integrating wellness components within physical education highlights the interconnectedness of physical, mental, and emotional health, acknowledging the importance of addressing behavioural aspects to foster comprehensive well-being. This approach not only cultivates essential life skills and habits among students but also contributes to their long-term health and success, enriching the educational experience and promoting positive outcomes for all involved.

## **Recommendation**

The findings of this study offer invaluable insights that can greatly benefit the field of teaching physical education. By highlighting the importance of Health Program Evaluation and Integrated Wellness within the context of Philippine schools, educators are equipped with a holistic understanding of how to promote well-being among students. The emphasis on assessing health practices, evaluating school health programs, and appraising program effectiveness provides educators with a robust framework for designing and implementing impactful interventions well-matched to the specific needs of their students. Moreover, the integration of wellness components within physical education underscores the interconnectedness of physical, mental, and emotional health, allowing educators to foster a comprehensive approach to wellness that goes beyond mere physical activity. By addressing behavioural aspects together with physical education, educators can nurture essential life skills and habits among students, ultimately contributing to their long-term health, success, and overall well-being.

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## Appendix A. Thematic Analysis - Significant Results and Formulated Meanings

Significant Results	Codes	Formulated Meanings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average health and wellness (physical and environmental; mental and emotional; and, spiritual and social) practices</li> <li>Significant relationship between age of the faculty and work performance; Significant relationship between sex of the non-teaching and work performance</li> </ul>	R1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessing holistic health practices and demographic impacts on work.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall good health status: blood pressure, waist-hip-ratio, medical history, behavioural health problems, physical life/health symptoms, mental/emotional health, stress evaluation, life enjoyment, quality of life and health goals.</li> </ul>	R2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessing multiple health factors for well-being</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average spiritual growth, interpersonal relationships, and stress management.</li> <li>Nutrition management, health responsibility and physical activity were sometimes practiced</li> </ul>	R3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spiritual, social growth, stress, nutrition, and exercise levels</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong agreement of Community Nurses' Contribution to School-Based Health Promotion Initiatives; Health Education Sessions; and Effectiveness in Supporting Overweight or Obese Students.</li> </ul>	R4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nurses support school health, aid overweight students.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs in schools means improved health of people of different ages.</li> </ul>	R5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WASH programs in schools enhance community health</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well implemented school health and nutrition program: education, services, healthful school living, school-community coordination</li> <li>No relationship between profile of the schools and school health and nutrition program</li> <li>Proposed intervention plan using Plan, Execute, Analyse, construct, and Evaluate (PEACE) Model to strengthen SHNP implementation</li> </ul>	R6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing comprehensive school health and nutrition programs with community coordination, despite no correlation with school profiles, while proposing PEACE Model intervention for enhancement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant Differences between health-related anthropometric and performance-related scores</li> <li>The progressive exercise model has little to no effect on Body Mass Index and Waist-Hip Ratio.</li> <li>Medium effect on Wall Squat scores for both genders</li> <li>Medium effect on Prone Bridge Test (PBT) and Three-Minute Step Test (STEP) scores post-treatment for male participants.</li> <li>Small effects on PBT and STEP scores post-treatment among female participants</li> </ul>	R7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anthropometric and performance scores differ; exercise model's impact</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant difference exists between Nutritional Status and nutritional school-based feeding program</li> <li>Significant difference exists between Academic Performance and nutritional school-based feeding program</li> </ul>	R8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nutritional program affects both status and performance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory reliable instrument (Cronbach's alpha 0.873) of for holistic development of students within educational institutions. Recommended to deploy the instrument that can effectively gauge the efficacy of diverse development strategies across multiple dimensions.</li> </ul>	R9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliable instrument measures holistic student development effectively</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quantitative phase revealed that both the internal stakeholders evaluated the standards of the CMO 39, s. 2021 and the QPE standards and found them to be extremely evident and extremely effective.</li> <li>Significant difference in the evaluation of the respondents. Significant predictors of program effectiveness were curriculum flexibility, teacher education supply and development, facilities, equipment, and resources, community partnership, and monitoring and quality assurance.</li> <li>The Innovative and Alternative Instrumentations for Inclusive Use of Facilities and Equipment were generated themes as notable practices and challenges encountered.</li> </ul>	R10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders find standards effective; predictors of program success</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PE teachers had a very good social health status. Most of them had outstanding teaching performances.</li> <li>There was a significant relationship between health status and teaching performance. Teachers' health status affects their teaching performance.</li> </ul>	R11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy PE teachers excel in teaching performance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three major themes with a total of thirteen subthemes emerged as key findings of this research: (1) Valuing Games for Education with Sub-themes, (a) Reminiscing Childhood Games, (b) Recognizing Games Positive Impact in the Classroom, (c) Treasuring Traditional Filipino Games, (2) Overcoming Obstacles with Sub-themes (a) Motivating Unengaged Learners to Move amidst Media and Technology, (b) Managing Unruly Learners during Games, (c) Lacking Facilities and Supplies, (d) Limiting Opportunities for Playtime, (3) Strategizing in a Dynamic Learning Environment with Sub-themes (a) Encouraging Active Exploration, (b) Using Cues and Procedures to Refocus Positive Behaviour (c) Improvising Space and Materials (d) Initiating Opportunities for Play, (e) Using Differentiated Playing Experiences, (f) Collaborating with Other Teachers.</li> </ul>	R12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating game-based education</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-efficacy, response efficacy, automatic precursors, and controlled precursors significantly and indirectly affect perceived behaviour.</li> <li>The effect on other people influences an individual's positive relationship with adaptable behaviour for physical activities. Similarly, the effects of other people may influence individuals to perform healthier lifestyles. These precursors had a direct significance with the intention to adapt, which subsequently led to the perceived behaviour of Filipinos in boosting physical fitness and lifestyle wellness.</li> <li>The integrated framework of PMT and TEMPA validated the factors affecting perceived behaviour to boost Filipinos' physical fitness and lifestyle wellness.</li> </ul>	R13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Factors influencing behaviour for fitness and wellness</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lot of respondents are living an unhealthy lifestyle from the food they eat, their lack of regular exercise and the activities they indulged in.</li> <li>Healthy lifestyle can be influenced by policies and governance in school, government, physical activity environment, food choices, and health as connectivity to the source (meditation, yoga, mindfulness exercise and prayers).</li> </ul>	R14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor lifestyle habits prevalent; governance impacts health</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most students engage in moderate physical activity, participating in various activities during their leisure time.</li> <li>They exhibit good cardiovascular endurance and flexibility through home exercises and stretching, but there's room for improvement in strength, particularly in push-ups.</li> <li>Male students show higher strength levels compared to females.</li> <li>The study emphasizes the importance of promoting an active lifestyle and calls for comprehensive fitness programs that address students' specific needs, including strength training, to improve their overall well-being and create a healthier future generation</li> </ul>	R15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students active, need strength training for wellness</li> </ul>

## Appendix B. Thematic Analysis - Formulated Meanings and Clustered Themes

Formulated Meanings	Clustered Themes
Assessing holistic health practices and demographic impacts on work	Assessment of Health Practices
Assessing multiple health factors for well-being	
Reliable instrument measures holistic student development effectively	
Anthropometric and performance scores differ; exercise model's impact	
Nurses support school health, aid overweight students	School Health Programs
WASH programs in schools enhance community health	
Implementing comprehensive school health and nutrition programs with community coordination, despite no correlation with school profiles, while proposing PEACE Model intervention for enhancement	
Nutritional program affects both status and performance	
Healthy PE teachers excel in teaching performance	Physical Education and Wellness
Students active, need strength training for wellness	
Integrating game-based education	
Stakeholders find standards effective; predictors of program success	Program Effectiveness
Spiritual, social growth, stress, nutrition, and exercise levels	Wellness and Behaviour
Factors influencing behaviour for fitness and wellness.	
Poor lifestyle habits prevalent; governance impacts health.	

## Appendix C. Thematic Analysis – Clustered Themes and Emergent Themes

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Assessment of Health Practices	Health Program Evaluation
School Health Programs	
Program Effectiveness	
Physical Education and Wellness	Integrated Wellness
Wellness and Behaviour	

## Appendix D. Figure Presentation of Clustered Themes and Emergent Themes

