

# Integration of Mental Health Promotion Strategies Within Physical Education Curricula

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**Abstract:** The present study investigated the incorporation of mental health promotion techniques within physical education curricula, as well as the influence of school policies in addressing the mental health needs of students. The sample predominantly comprised male physical education instructors between the ages of 31 and 40, who possessed 11 to 20 years of teaching experience. The results of the study indicated a uniform degree of integration among physical education instructors across various age and experience cohorts. This finding implies the significance of incorporating continuous mental health education within physical education curricula, however there were observed discrepancies across distinct domains. Significantly, the domain of social and emotional learning had comparatively lower scores, hence highlighting the necessity for focused enhancements in these specific aspects. Educators played a pivotal part in modifying their instructional approaches to cater to the mental health requirements of their students. The proponents placed significant emphasis on the principles of individualization, emotional management, and value-oriented pedagogy. The emergence of school policies also played a crucial role. The policies should prioritize the implementation of strategies, comprehensive staff training, the utilization of diverse educational techniques, active collaboration with parents, the provision of extracurricular activities, the availability of psychological counseling services, the integration of ideological perspectives, and the adoption of a student-centered approach.

**Keywords:** Mental Health; Physical Education Curricula; Strategies.

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## 1. Introduction

The futures of both people and civilizations are profoundly influenced by the quality of their educational experiences. It is impossible to overestimate the significance of a high-quality education in China, a country with a fast-expanding economy and a major impact on the world stage.

Education in China has undergone dramatic reforms in recent years. The government has introduced new curriculum, teacher training programs, and the use of technology in the classroom as part of a wide range of changes aimed at improving the standard of education. China's goal in emphasizing STEM education is to produce a workforce that can aid in the development of new scientific discoveries and technical breakthroughs.

But then, aside from focusing and developing technical skills of students, it has started to give premium on the mental health of its citizens. The best venue to do this is fortifying the existing Physical Education (PE) program. Integrating mental health promotion initiatives into physical education programs is one promising strategy for achieving this goal. The incorporation of mental health education and promotion into physical education courses has been shown to improve students' well-being and academic performance (Lu et al., 2018).

The Chinese government values a well-rounded education and the development of all of its citizens, thus it makes sense to include measures for promoting mental health into physical education. China can improve its education system and the lives of its students by giving equal weight to students' mental and physical health.

There is a pressing need for schools to include mental health promotion techniques in their physical education programs. There is a rising awareness of the need to treat mental health difficulties within the school setting since mental health issues continue to impact a huge number of kids

globally. Studies have shown positive outcomes for students who participate in physical education programs that include emphasize mental health promotion (Yu et al., 2019).

The potential for this research to improve students' health and happiness makes it crucial. Quality of life, relationships, and success in school may all benefit from good mental health.

The physical advantages of physical education, such as enhanced fitness and motor abilities, have been the primary focus of previous studies. However, the potential function of physical education in boosting mental health and wellbeing has received little consideration. Because of this knowledge gap, further studies are needed to determine how best to include tactics for promoting students' mental health into physical education programs for the benefit of students as a whole (Lu et al., 2018).

## 2. Significance of the Study

### 2.1. Instructors of Physical Education

The research may give insights and suggestions to assist instructors improve their knowledge and execution of mental health promotion initiatives in their curriculum. It may provide them with the information, tools, and support they need to provide a healthy and supportive atmosphere for their students' mental health.

### 2.2. Mental Health Professionals

The outcomes of the research might raise awareness among mental health professionals regarding the possible significance of physical education in promoting mental well-being. They may work with physical education programs to give knowledge and resources to help promote mental health.

### 2.3. Future Researchers

Researchers in the fields of physical education, mental health, and teenage well-being may benefit from the study's

results. It may be used as a starting point for future study, adding to the body of information and understanding of successful techniques for integrating mental health promotion into physical education curriculum.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) theory. An acknowledgment and small re-orientation of priority, hierarchy, and practice within the framework of public education, Social-Emotional Learning places an emphasis on the student's mental health. Thus, it is one educational theory or idea that may be used to study on the integration of mental health promotion techniques within physical education curriculum. SEL is a framework that focuses on the development of students' social and emotional abilities in order to improve overall well-being and academic achievement. Students' social and emotional abilities, according to SEL theory, are crucial for their mental health, productive relationships, and successful learning. By addressing students' social and emotional needs holistically, the integration of mental health promotion initiatives within physical education coincides with the ideas of SEL theory.

In a nutshell, the Social-Emotional Learning theory offers a beneficial educational framework for comprehending the

significance and effect of incorporating mental health promotion initiatives into physical education curriculum. It emphasizes the need of treating kids' social and emotional needs in addition to their physical development in order to promote their overall well-being and academic performance.

### 4. Results and Discussion

This chapter contains a tabular representation of the data collected, as well as its analysis and interpretation. The conclusions in this section are based on a statistical analysis performed with jamovi 2.3.19.

To determine whether the parametric test would be used to address the research objectives, a normality test, namely the Shapiro-Wilk test, was performed. Parametric testing is used when the p-values are greater than 0.05. If the p-values are less than 0.05 and the data is not normally distributed, nonparametric tests would be used.

The research questions posted in this study are once again recalled. Consequently, the findings are presented along with its interpretation and analysis.

#### 4.1. Assessment and Evaluation of Students' Mental Health

**Table 1.** Assessment of Level of Integration of Mental Health Promotion Strategies with Physical Education Curricula in terms of Assessment and Evaluation of Students' Mental Health

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Physical education instructors utilize exams to examine pupils' grasp of mental health principles.	2.05	0.87	Low	1
2. Formal evaluations are included in the physical education curriculum to measure students' social and emotional well-being.	1.92	0.88	Low	10
3. Physical education instructors give students with feedback on their development of social and emotional skills.	1.93	0.88	Low	9
4. Rubrics or rules for measuring students' mental health development are included in the physical education curriculum.	1.99	0.92	Low	4
5. Physical education instructors use a variety of evaluation techniques to identify pupils' strengths and areas for growth.	1.98	0.90	Low	5
6. The physical education curriculum offers methods for pupils to measure their own mental health.	2.00	0.87	Low	2.5
7. Physical education instructors convey mental health evaluation findings to parents/guardians.	2.00	0.88	Low	2.5
8. The physical education curriculum allows pupils to reflect on their social and emotional development.	1.94	0.92	Low	8
9. Physical education instructors employ regular formative assessments to track the mental health progress of their pupils.	1.97	0.93	Low	6
10. The physical education curriculum includes examinations of students' mental health on an individual and group basis.	1.95	0.91	Low	7
<b>COMPOSITE MEAN</b>	<b>1.97</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>Low</b>	

*Legend: 1.00-1.75: Strongly Disagree (Very Low); 1.76-2.50: Disagree (Low); 2.51-3.26; Agree (Average); 3.27-4.00: Strongly Agree (High)*

Table 1 shows how respondents rated the level of integration of mental health promotion strategies within physical education curricula in terms of assessment and evaluation of students' mental health. The variable's composite mean was 1.97, with a standard deviation of 0.73. This means that PE instructors disagree that formal evaluations are included in the physical education curriculum to measure students' social and emotional well-being, that PE instructors provide students with feedback on their social and emotional skill development, and that PE instructors allow

students to reflect on their social and emotional development. Moreover, a low level of integration implies that students may not receive adequate mental health education or support within the context of physical education. This can result in missed opportunities to promote mental health, reduce stigma, and provide students with the skills they need to manage their mental health effectively.

## 4.2. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

**Table 2.** Assessment of Level of Integration of Mental Health Promotion Strategies with Physical Education Curricula in terms of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. The physical education curriculum includes exercises that enhance self-awareness and self-management abilities.	1.84	0.92	Low	7.5
2. Physical education lessons give opportunity for pupils to exercise responsible decision-making.	1.85	0.98	Low	6
3. The physical education curriculum contains courses or activities that enhance relationship-building among pupils.	1.84	0.93	Low	7.5
4. Physical education instructors urge pupils to build empathy and display compassion towards others.	1.93	0.97	Low	1
5. The physical education curriculum encourages the development of problem-solving and conflict resolution abilities.	1.86	0.91	Low	5
6. Physical education programs contain exercises that develop students' social skills and collaboration.	1.83	0.89	Low	9
7. The physical education curriculum includes techniques to encourage pupils in building good self-esteem.	1.87	1.00	Low	4
8. Physical education instructors offer a safe and inclusive atmosphere for children to express their feelings.	1.92	0.95	Low	2
9. Students are encouraged to develop and attain personal objectives via the physical education program.	1.82	0.92	Low	10
10. Physical education programs allow pupils to reflect on their emotions and general well-being.	1.89	0.95	Low	3
<b>COMPOSITE MEAN</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>Low</b>	

*Legend: 1.00-1.75: Strongly Disagree (Very Low); 1.76-2.50: Disagree (Low); 2.51-3.26; Agree (Average); 3.27-4.00: Strongly Agree (High)*

Table 2 presents the respondents' assessment of the level of integration of mental health promotion strategies within physical education curricula in terms of social and emotional learning. The variable yielded a composite mean of 1.87 and a standardized deviation of 0.79, indicating that PE instructors have a low assessment and disagree that the physical education program encourages students to develop and achieve personal goals, includes exercises that develop

students' social skills and collaboration, and includes exercises that enhance self-awareness and self-management abilities. Similarly, a low level of integration in this area indicates that there may be limited attention given to fostering the skills and competencies necessary for building healthy relationships, managing emotions, and making responsible decisions.

## 5. Conclusion

1. The holistic approach to mental health promotion within physical education is evident through positive assessments in multiple domains, such as evaluating students' mental health, fostering collaborations and partnerships, providing resources and materials, creating supportive environments, and encouraging student engagement and participation.

2. Although the comprehensive evaluation yields a favorable outcome, certain domains, namely social and emotional learning, have comparatively lower ratings. This underscores the necessity for focused endeavors aimed at improving the incorporation of these elements into physical education syllabi. Professional development and training programs have the potential to serve as useful resources for enhancing these domains.

3. The research offers a basis for improving mental health education within the framework of physical education courses. This statement underscores the significance of ongoing study and assessment in order to improve and broaden these approaches, thereby making a positive impact on the holistic welfare of students.

4. Educators exhibit a dedication to employing individualized, emotionally nurturing, and inclusive instructional strategies to cater to the mental well-being of students, while educational guidelines emphasize the significance of organized implementation, professional development for staff, varied pedagogical approaches, parental involvement, extracurricular engagements, psychological assistance, ideological integration, and a student-centric orientation in order to augment students' mental health.

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