

LIVED EXPERIENCES OF MAPEH TEACHERS IN UBAY 1 DISTRICT: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

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Globally, the teaching of Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) play a crucial role in advancing holistic education, yet teachers continue to face systemic challenges in curriculum delivery, resource allocation, and learner engagement. In the Philippine context, these concerns are highlighted in the government's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education), which emphasize inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all learners. Despite these initiatives, there remains limited research focusing on the lived experiences of MAPEH teachers in local districts, especially in rural areas such as Ubay, Bohol. This study explored the opportunities and challenges faced by MAPEH teachers in Ubay 1 District. Employing a Phenomenological Research Design, data were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight teacher-informants and focus group



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discussions with ten students, selected through purposive sampling. Findings revealed key opportunities, such as fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthening professional development, integrating digital tools, and embedding sustainability initiatives. Conversely, persistent challenges included limited access to technology, time constraints, varying student abilities, and difficulties in harmonizing the four components of MAPEH. Conclusively, these findings highlight the need for targeted interventions. The study concludes that addressing these challenges requires enhanced teacher capacity-building, improved technological support, and greater emphasis on differentiated instruction. Furthermore, embedding sustainability and social responsibility in MAPEH instruction not only aligns with the SDGs but also prepares learners to engage actively with real-world issues. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, administrators, and educators in strengthening MAPEH education in the Philippine context

INTRODUCTION

Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) occupies a distinctive position within basic education because it contributes to learners' holistic development by integrating cognitive, affective, psychomotor, social, and creative competencies. Unlike many academic disciplines that primarily emphasize intellectual development, MAPEH promotes physical wellness, artistic expression, cultural literacy, emotional well-being, and social responsibility. These outcomes are consistent with contemporary educational frameworks that advocate for whole-child development and lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2015). The importance of MAPEH has become increasingly evident in the twenty-first century as educational systems respond to complex societal challenges, including declining physical activity among youth, mental health concerns, technological transformation, and the need for creativity and innovation in learning. Physical education and health education have been recognized as critical contributors to student well-being and academic success, while music and arts education foster creativity, communication, and cultural understanding (WHO, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Consequently, educational institutions worldwide continue to strengthen arts, health, and physical education programs as part of comprehensive educational reforms.

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which posits that learning occurs through a cyclical process involving concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Within MAPEH instruction, experiential learning is particularly relevant because students learn through performance, movement, artistic production, health-related activities, and authentic engagement with real-life situations. The theory suggests that meaningful learning occurs when learners actively participate in experiences and subsequently reflect upon them to construct knowledge and skills.

The study is likewise informed by Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (1978), which emphasizes the social nature of learning. According to this perspective, knowledge is co-constructed through interactions among teachers, learners, and the learning environment. MAPEH classrooms inherently involve collaborative performances, group activities, sports participation, artistic productions, and peer interactions that facilitate the construction of knowledge and skills. This theoretical lens provides a framework for understanding how MAPEH teachers navigate opportunities and challenges as they foster collaborative and engaging learning environments.

The integration of technology into teaching further necessitates the consideration of the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Framework proposed by Mishra and Koehler (2006). TPACK highlights the interconnected relationship among content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and technological knowledge in effective instruction. For MAPEH teachers, balancing expertise across four distinct disciplines while integrating digital technologies presents unique instructional opportunities and challenges. The framework provides a useful lens for examining how teachers utilize technological resources to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Recent studies indicate that teachers worldwide continue to encounter significant challenges related to resource limitations, curriculum demands, learner diversity, and technology integration. A systematic review by König et al. (2020) found that teachers' adaptability, technological competence, and professional resilience significantly influence instructional effectiveness in rapidly changing educational environments. Similarly, Kim and Asbury (2020) reported that teachers often face increased workload, pedagogical adjustments, and emotional strain while simultaneously developing innovative teaching practices and professional growth opportunities. These findings suggest that challenges may serve as catalysts for instructional innovation and professional development.

In the Philippine context, the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum and subsequent reforms under the MATATAG Agenda have further underscored the need for responsive, learner-centered instruction. While these reforms seek to strengthen foundational competencies and improve educational quality, they also require teachers to continuously adapt their pedagogical practices, instructional materials, and assessment strategies (Barrot, 2023). For MAPEH teachers, these demands are intensified by the subject's integrated nature, which requires competence across music, arts, physical education, and health.

Empirical evidence from the Philippines indicates that MAPEH teachers frequently encounter challenges due to limited instructional resources, inadequate facilities, insufficient professional development opportunities, and mismatches in specialization (Daga, 2021). Nevertheless, studies consistently demonstrate that teachers employ adaptive strategies such as contextualization,

localization, collaborative learning, and resource improvisation to maintain instructional quality. These practices reflect a high degree of professional resilience and commitment to student learning.

Despite the growing body of literature on MAPEH instruction, existing research has largely focused on curriculum implementation, teacher preparedness, and instructional challenges in urban or highly accessible educational settings. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to understanding the lived experiences of MAPEH teachers in rural districts where resource limitations, geographical realities, and contextual factors may shape instructional practice differently. Understanding these experiences is essential because teacher perspectives provide valuable insights into the realities of curriculum implementation and educational improvement.

In the Province of Bohol, particularly in the Ubay 1 District, MAPEH teachers play a critical role in promoting holistic education despite varying contextual constraints. However, there remains limited empirical evidence regarding how these educators navigate instructional opportunities and challenges across the four integrated domains of MAPEH. Addressing this gap is important not only for enhancing instructional practice but also for informing professional development initiatives, resource allocation, and educational policies that support quality MAPEH education.

Hence, this phenomenological study seeks to explore and describe the lived experiences of MAPEH teachers in Ubay 1 District, focusing on the opportunities they leverage, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies they employ in delivering instruction. By examining these experiences, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of MAPEH teaching in rural educational contexts and provides evidence-based insights to strengthen educational practice and policy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore and describe the lived experiences of MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health) teachers regarding the opportunities and challenges they encounter in instructional practice. Specifically, the study adopted Husserlian descriptive phenomenology, which seeks to uncover and describe the essence of a phenomenon as experienced by individuals in their everyday lives (Moustakas, 1994). This approach was deemed appropriate because the study aimed to understand how teachers perceive, interpret, and make meaning of their experiences in teaching MAPEH within public secondary schools.

Phenomenology is particularly valuable in educational research because it allows researchers to investigate the subjective realities of teachers and the meanings they attach to their professional experiences. Through this design, the study sought to generate rich descriptions of the opportunities available to

MAPEH teachers, the challenges they face, and the strategies they employ to navigate instructional demands in diverse school contexts.

Research Locale. The study was conducted in five public secondary schools within Ubay 1 District, Division of Bohol, Philippines. The participating schools are situated in the communities of Camambugan, Tubog, Tapal, Poblacion, and Fatima. These schools were selected because they represent diverse educational environments in terms of school size, learner population, resource availability, geographical accessibility, and community context. Such diversity provided a comprehensive setting for examining the realities of MAPEH instruction across varying educational conditions.

Participants and Sampling Procedure. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, a technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify information-rich individuals with direct experience of the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2015).

The primary participants consisted of eight (8) MAPEH teachers and district coordinators who met the following inclusion criteria:

1. Currently employed as full-time public secondary school teachers;
2. Teaching MAPEH during the conduct of the study;
3. Possessing at least two consecutive years of MAPEH teaching experience; and
4. Willing to participate voluntarily in the research.

Teachers holding part-time appointments or those affiliated with private educational institutions were excluded to ensure consistency in professional experiences and institutional contexts.

To enhance data triangulation and provide complementary perspectives, ten (10) students participated in focus group discussions (FGDs). Student participants were selected based on their active participation in MAPEH classes and their ability to articulate their learning experiences. Their inclusion provided additional insights into instructional practices and enriched the interpretation of teacher narratives.

Participant recruitment continued until data saturation was achieved, that is, when no new themes, meanings, or insights emerged from successive interviews and discussions.

Research Instrument. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide. The interview protocol was designed to elicit detailed narratives regarding the opportunities, challenges, and instructional practices associated with teaching MAPEH. Questions focused on instructional relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, learner engagement, resource adequacy, technology integration, assessment practices, and professional development.

To establish content validity, the interview guide was reviewed by three experts specializing in educational research, curriculum studies, and MAPEH education. Recommendations from the validators were incorporated to improve clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. A pilot interview was

subsequently conducted with a non-participating MAPEH teacher to refine question sequencing, wording, and probing techniques.

The interview guide consisted of three sections: (1) introductory questions intended to establish rapport and gather contextual information; (2) probing questions designed to explore participants' experiences in depth; and (3) concluding questions that encouraged reflection, clarification, and additional insights.

A separate focus group discussion guide was developed for student participants to gather their perceptions regarding classroom instruction, learning experiences, and engagement in MAPEH classes.

Data Collection Procedure. Prior to data collection, approval was secured from the Schools Division Office of Bohol, school heads, and participating schools. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after explaining the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, confidentiality measures, and participants' rights.

Individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teacher-informants. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent. Field notes were maintained to document contextual observations, non-verbal cues, and researcher reflections.

To complement the interview data, focus group discussions were conducted with student participants. Each session lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes and was facilitated using a structured discussion guide aligned with the study objectives. The FGDs served as a form of methodological triangulation and provided additional perspectives regarding the implementation of MAPEH instruction.

All interviews and discussions were transcribed verbatim immediately after data collection to preserve the accuracy and richness of participants' narratives.

Prior to data collection and analysis, the researcher engaged in *epoché* or bracketing by documenting personal beliefs, assumptions, and prior experiences related to MAPEH instruction through reflexive journaling. This process helped minimize researcher bias and ensured that interpretations remained grounded in participants' lived experiences.

Data Analysis. The collected data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method. This systematic approach is widely recognized for its rigor in descriptive phenomenological research and enables researchers to derive the essential structure of participants' lived experiences.

The analysis involved the following stages:

1. Familiarization through repeated reading of interview transcripts;
2. Extraction of significant statements directly related to the phenomenon;
3. Formulation of meanings from significant statements;
4. Organization of formulated meanings into clusters of themes;

5. Development of exhaustive descriptions of the phenomenon;
6. Formulation of the fundamental structure of the experience; and
7. Validation of findings through member checking.

Coding and thematic organization were performed manually and supported by qualitative data management procedures to ensure consistency and analytical rigor.

Trustworthiness of the Study. To ensure the rigor and quality of the findings, the study adhered to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness.

Credibility. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement, member checking, triangulation of data sources, and peer debriefing.

Transferability. Rich and detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and findings were provided to enable readers to determine the applicability of the results to similar educational settings.

Dependability. An audit trail documenting methodological decisions, coding procedures, and analytical processes was maintained throughout the study.

Confirmability. Reflexive journaling, field notes, and peer examination were employed to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in participants' accounts rather than in the researcher's assumptions.

Ethical Considerations. The study adhered to established ethical principles governing research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured prior to data collection. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of pseudonyms and coded identifiers. Audio recordings, transcripts, and related documents were stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher. All information was treated with strict confidentiality and managed in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173).

The researcher ensured that participants were treated with respect, dignity, and sensitivity throughout the research process, thereby safeguarding their rights and well-being.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Interdisciplinary and Experiential Learning as a Catalyst for Meaningful MAPEH Instruction

Participants consistently described MAPEH as most effective when instruction was experiential, interactive, and connected to real-life contexts. Teachers emphasized the use of performances, competitions, demonstrations, collaborative projects, and interdisciplinary activities that integrated MAPEH concepts with other subject areas. Examples included theater productions linked to Filipino literature, nutrition-related activities integrated with

Technology and Livelihood Education, and performance-based tasks connected to English, Science, and Araling Panlipunan.

Both teachers and students perceived interdisciplinary learning as enhancing engagement, retention, and the practical application of knowledge. Through these activities, learners developed not only artistic and physical competencies but also confidence, teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The findings suggest that experiential and integrated instruction enables learners to appreciate the interconnected nature of knowledge and promotes holistic development.

These findings support the principles of experiential learning, which posit that meaningful learning occurs through active participation and reflection on authentic experiences (Kolb, 1984). Similarly, interdisciplinary approaches have been found to enhance learner engagement and facilitate deeper understanding by connecting concepts across disciplines (Drake & Reid, 2020). Research further indicates that arts-integrated and performance-based instruction promotes student motivation, creativity, and academic achievement (Burnaford et al., 2019).

Theme 2: MAPEH as a Platform for Holistic Development

Teachers viewed MAPEH as a vital avenue for nurturing students' physical, emotional, social, and psychological well-being. Participants highlighted how the subject fosters confidence, self-expression, healthy lifestyles, resilience, and positive social interactions. Students similarly described MAPEH as enjoyable, motivating, and beneficial to their personal growth and well-being.

Despite recognizing its value, teachers noted limited opportunities for specialized professional development focused specifically on MAPEH pedagogy. Many participants reported relying on self-directed learning, personal initiative, and informal professional networks to improve their instructional practices.

The findings align with previous studies emphasizing the role of arts, health, and physical education in promoting students' holistic development and socio-emotional well-being (UNESCO, 2023). Teacher professional development likewise remains a critical factor influencing instructional effectiveness and learner outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Theme 3: Technology Integration and Resourcefulness in Instruction

Participants identified technology integration as a significant opportunity for enhancing MAPEH instruction. Teachers reported utilizing multimedia resources, digital platforms, online videos, and interactive presentations to increase learner engagement and improve classroom experiences. Students likewise appreciated the use of technology, describing lessons as more organized, enjoyable, and accessible.

However, teachers also demonstrated considerable resourcefulness when technological resources were unavailable. Some participants developed

localized instructional materials, improvised learning resources, and personally invested in teaching materials to support classroom instruction.

These findings support the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, which emphasizes the integration of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge to facilitate meaningful learning experiences (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Studies have similarly shown that effective technology integration can enhance learner engagement and instructional effectiveness, particularly when combined with contextualized and learner-centered pedagogies (Koehler et al., 2019).

Theme 4: Coherence and Integration Across MAPEH Components

Participants emphasized the importance of maintaining coherence among the four components of MAPEH—Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health. Teachers intentionally connected lessons across these domains to provide students with a unified learning experience. Students reported that such integration improved understanding and reduced confusion, enabling them to recognize the relevance of each component to everyday life.

The findings suggest that coherent curriculum integration contributes to meaningful learning and strengthens students' ability to transfer knowledge across contexts. Curriculum coherence has been identified as a key feature of effective instruction because it promotes continuity, relevance, and conceptual understanding (Schmidt et al., 2018).

Theme 5: Sustainability and Community-Oriented Learning

Participants described sustainability-oriented practices as an important opportunity within MAPEH instruction. Teachers integrated recycling, localization, environmental stewardship, and community-based activities into their lessons. Students reported participating in tree-planting activities, recycling projects, clean-up drives, and health-related initiatives that extended learning beyond the classroom.

These experiences fostered environmental awareness, civic responsibility, and healthy lifestyles among learners. The findings are consistent with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) principles, which emphasize experiential and community-based learning as mechanisms for developing environmentally responsible citizens (UNESCO, 2020).

Opportunities

1. One of the key findings of this study is the importance of making MAPEH classes relevant and engaging for students. Teachers emphasized the role of interactive learning methods such as competitions, collaborative activities, and real-world applications. These methods not only foster students' physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual development but also help integrate MAPEH with other subjects like Filipino, TLE, and

Science. This interdisciplinary approach encourages students to apply their knowledge across contexts such as nutrition, health, and theater, making learning more dynamic. Feedback from both teachers and students highlighted the positive impact of collaborative teaching strategies, which enhance students' confidence and holistic development. Therefore, integrating MAPEH with other subjects offers significant educational benefits by promoting a more well-rounded learning experience.

2. MAPEH has been shown to impact students' overall well-being and development positively. Teachers observed that MAPEH boosts students' confidence, mental health, physical strength, and social skills. This is achieved not only through skill development but also by helping students overcome personal challenges, such as stage fright. Students develop a passion for life both in and out of school, indicating that MAPEH plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals. However, there is a noticeable gap in specialized professional development for MAPEH teachers, which could be addressed to improve teaching strategies further. Despite this, teachers' dedication to enhancing their methods demonstrates their commitment to student growth.
3. The study highlighted the growing adoption of digital resources and technology by MAPEH teachers. These tools help create an engaging and effective learning environment, manage student progress, and streamline lessons. Some teachers also effectively manage their time to balance lessons and activities, while others use local materials to enhance learning. While many teachers benefit from updated curriculum materials, some face delays or misalignment, which affects lesson delivery. However, the use of technology, coupled with effective classroom management and constructive feedback, fosters a productive learning environment for students.
4. Another significant finding was the importance of coherence and continuity in teaching the four components of MAPEH. Teachers make an effort to integrate music, arts, physical education, and health to provide a unified learning experience. This helps students understand the relevance of each component and its contribution to their overall learning. Students also noted the interconnectedness of lessons, which reinforces their understanding and motivation to engage with the material. Coherent teaching contributes to students' comprehension, personal growth, and long-term engagement with MAPEH.
5. MAPEH teachers are committed to promoting sustainability and social responsibility by incorporating these values into their teaching. Teachers use initiatives like recycling and the use of local materials to ensure that students develop environmental awareness and social responsibility. Activities such as tree planting and recycling not only engage students in real-world applications but also teach them the importance of being responsible stewards of nature. These initiatives contribute to long-

term sustainability and help prepare students to address societal and environmental challenges in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The lived experiences of MAPEH teachers in Ubay 1 District reveal that instructional practice is characterized by both meaningful opportunities and persistent challenges. Teachers viewed MAPEH as a valuable platform for promoting holistic learner development through experiential, interdisciplinary, and learner-centered approaches. The integration of music, arts, physical education, and health enabled students to develop not only academic competencies but also creativity, collaboration, self-expression, and personal well-being.

The findings further demonstrate that technology integration, curriculum coherence, and sustainability-oriented learning provide important opportunities for enhancing learner engagement and instructional effectiveness. Despite resource limitations and contextual constraints, teachers consistently demonstrated adaptability, innovation, and professional commitment by utilizing localized materials, collaborative strategies, and contextualized instructional approaches.

At the same time, participants identified challenges related to technology access, resource adequacy, assessment demands, time constraints, learner diversity, and the integration of the four MAPEH domains. These challenges required teachers to continuously modify instruction and develop creative solutions to sustain meaningful learning experiences.

Overall, the study highlights the resilience, resourcefulness, and dedication of MAPEH teachers in delivering quality instruction despite contextual limitations. The findings underscore the importance of sustained professional development, institutional support, curriculum enhancement, and resource provision to strengthen MAPEH education and promote holistic learner development in rural educational settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Enhance Professional Development for MAPEH Teachers.** Although MAPEH teachers are committed to improving their teaching methods, specialized professional development opportunities are lacking. To address this gap, targeted workshops, training sessions, and seminars on effective MAPEH teaching strategies will empower educators to continuously improve their practices. Additionally, offering professional development that focuses on teacher well-being and mental health is crucial. Providing stress management, self-care, and resilience workshops will support teachers' mental health, helping ensure they remain motivated and effective in the classroom.

2. **Invest in Technological Resources and Access.** The study indicates that integrating digital tools in MAPEH classrooms significantly enhances learning. However, access to technology remains a challenge, especially in rural areas. Ensuring equitable access to digital resources and incorporating digital literacy training for both students and teachers will help bridge the gap and provide a more dynamic and inclusive learning experience.
3. **Strengthen Interdisciplinary and Holistic Approaches:** Teachers have successfully integrated MAPEH with other subjects, such as Filipino, TLE, and Science. Expanding this interdisciplinary approach by encouraging greater cross-disciplinary collaboration will foster a more comprehensive and engaging learning experience for students. Additionally, ensuring that all four MAPEH components (Music, Arts, PE, and Health) remain interconnected will give students a deeper understanding and a more cohesive educational experience.
4. **Address Student Diversity and Individual Needs:** Given the challenges related to student diversity, including varying levels of ability and personal interests, it is crucial to continue adopting differentiated instruction and personalized learning strategies. This will ensure that every student, regardless of their abilities or preferences, has the opportunity to succeed and feel valued in the classroom.
5. **Promote Sustainability and Social Responsibility:** MAPEH education significantly fosters environmental and social responsibility among students. Expanding and reinforcing sustainability initiatives within the curriculum, such as recycling, tree planting, and community-based projects, will equip students with the mindset and skills needed to contribute positively to society and the environment.
6. **Improve Curriculum Coherence and Connectivity:** Ensuring that lessons across the four MAPEH components are well-integrated and consistent will improve students' overall understanding and engagement. Teachers should continue refining their teaching methods and utilizing various resources, while school leadership should provide support to ensure updated and aligned curriculum materials are available.

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