

The Health Benefits of Traditional Games in Mental Well-Being of BPE Students

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how traditional Filipino games can support the mental well-being of Bachelor of Physical Education (BPE) students at Central Philippine Adventist College. In recent years, college students have increasingly faced mental health challenges linked to sedentary lifestyles and reduced physical and social activity. In response to this concern, the study sought to determine whether engaging in traditional games could positively influence students' mental well-being. A quasi-experimental research design was employed involving ten (10) BPE students who participated in a traditional game intervention. Mental well-being was measured using the MHA Screening (2014) Anxiety Test administered before and after the intervention. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired sample t-test. The results showed a clear improvement in students' mental well-being following participation in a traditional game. Both male and female participants demonstrated reduced anxiety levels in the post-test results. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. These findings indicated that traditional games contributed positively to mental well-being by encouraging physical movement, social interaction, and cultural engagement. Overall, the study concluded that traditional Filipino games are not only valuable practices that promotes Filipino values and preserves culture but also practical and cost-effective tools for promoting mental health among college students. Integrating traditional games into physical education programs may serve as a meaningful and holistic approach to enhancing student wellness.

Keywords: traditional games, mental well-being, Bachelor of Physical Education, Filipino culture, quasi-experimental study

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Traditional Filipino games are recognized as important cultural assets that preserve the traditions and identities of local communities. Ferolino and Marasigan (2022, as cited in Bulilawa & Ladaran, 2025) described *Larong Pinoy* as cultural expressions that embody community values and practices rather than mere recreational activities. Their transmission across generations has enabled them to promote social engagement, support physical development, and preserve cultural heritage, especially in rural settings.

Muhaimin et al. (2024) highlighted that traditional games are an important part of cultural heritage, embodying historical and social significance while also contributing to physical fitness. In Indonesia, traditional games such as *gobak sodor*, *benteng*, and *engklek* have been deeply rooted in community life for many years. However, the rapid advancement of technology, including video games and online applications, has led to a decline in the participation and interest of children and adolescents in these traditional forms of play.

The prevalence of traditional children's games has declined in recent years as sedentary behaviors, technology-driven entertainment, and structured educational commitments have become more dominant. This trend has raised questions about the adequacy of children's movement experiences and their implications for physical development and well-being (Cinar, et al., 2024)

Worldwide, the massive penetration of smartphones and digital consumptions has reshaped leisure activities, younger generations have a strong preference for digital games rather than traditional games (Rahman, 2025). This transition resulted in less physical activity and interaction with others, both of which are essential for mental and emotional well-being. The children's and young people's traditional games are being looked down upon in comparison to attractive, more colorful screens and visual digital games, which is leading to a loss of interest among the children and young people.

Time-honored Filipino games that were mostly played on the streets and public areas such as patintero and tumbang preso have been played for many generations, though few are still played today, among the youth in particular. It is said to have decreased due to the impact of digital technology and sedentary lifestyle that distract Filipino children's attention from active play towards screen-related activities, elevating inactivity- and poor mental health-related vulnerabilities among them (Dizer et al., 2022). Digital and social media use for entertainment has been increasingly favored by Filipino youth, which also poses greater risk of anxiety, depression, social withdrawal and decreased physical activity (Karaköse et al., 2023).

In Bacolod City, the issue of dying traditional games is more than just a matter of culture; it is also a matter of the mental health of the young people. The city is experiencing an increase in mental health concerns among students, including higher rates of anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems, which are linked partly to decreased physical activity and social interaction (Bacolod City Health Office, (Magluyan & San Jose, 2025). Traditional games have been found to improve physical health, emotional regulation, socialization interaction, and cognitive skills which are fundamental elements in achieving mental wellness (Dizer et al., 2022). Yet, these games have been declining because of urbanization, the scarcity of safe play spaces to its own kind, and digital technology taken over them. But the articles are online schools and community programs in the city of Bacolod have not yet fully adopted the equipment in mental health or PE syllabus associated with those tools in the culture that's become a home to these are very relevant implement in the local community.

Traditional sports and games have been found to inculcate values cooperation, discipline, friendship, and psychological strength which contribute to mental health (Siregar & Ilham, 2019). Despite these advantages, there is a lack of institutional support and little study has been done on the contribution to mental health, particularly in local contexts. Therefore, the goal of this study is to support the evidence supporting the preservation and spread of traditional games in the face of conflicting "educational" and "healthy lifestyle" agendas by showing how the games may be used to support mental health and, in doing so, guarantee cultural continuity and youth well-being in the Philippines.

Even as mental health and mindfulness in schools are becoming more recognized, the vast majority of schools still operate within a tightly-regimented system that gives little consideration to rest, mindfulness, or general well-being. In particular, Physical Education (PE) lessons are not able to deliver mindfulness-based blocks and many PE courses are the same. This exposed a blind spot in the teaching methods of today's schools: (Donato, et al.2025) The traditional method of education which those methods relied so heavily on providing an academic and occupational work ethic, neglected the health of mind and emotions creating an environment that stifled the potential to foster mindfulness education.

While previous research demonstrated positive physical and academic benefits for students from quality physical activity programming with a high degree of objectivity, there are limited studies that examined what would motivate or discourage students in the Philippines to join school-based fitness activities. The absence of locally produced evidence-based data hinders the development of learner-sensitive/culture-specific intervention package. To address the void, the study investigated the advantages of traditional games to Filipino college

students in their mental well-being. Despite these positive insights, local literature remained largely descriptive, focusing on cultural preservation and general student engagement rather than rigorous measurement of mental health outcomes (Magalona, 2025).

Few Philippine studies have applied standardized psychological instruments such as the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) or the Generalized Anxiety Disorder scale (GAD-7) to evaluate the impact of traditional games. Consequently, the effect of traditional play on stress, anxiety, or depression among tertiary-level students particularly Bachelor of Physical Education (BPE) majors remained under-explored. Addressing this gap through quasi-experimental research will not only strengthen the evidence base but also provide practical guidance for integrating traditional games into formal education as a strategy for promoting mental well-being.

Statement of the problem

The main aim of this research is to determine the influence of traditional games on the mental health of Bachelor of Physical Education (BPE) students through a quasi-experimental design specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions;

1. What are the mental Well-being of the participants before and after the Traditional game in term of gender?
2. Compare the pre-test and post-test results of BPE students who engaged in traditional games.
3. Is there a significant difference between pre-test and post-test?

Scope and limitation

This study investigates how students from Central Philippine Adventist College, particularly those in the barangays, are affected by traditional sports that require physical activity during the academic year 2025–2026 in Alegria, Murcia, Negros Occidental. Ten students enrolled in the Bachelor of Physical Education program are the participants. Among various traditional Filipino games, the study focuses solely on the slipper game to evaluate its impact on psychological well-being and physical fitness.

Significance of the Study

This study investigates the health advantages of traditional games in college students' physical activities, with a focus on how they affect mental well-being. College students, P.E. instructors, and other stakeholders can benefit from the research's conclusions. Teacher, heads of departments, and aspiring researchers.

College Students. This study emphasizes how playing traditional games as part of physical activities can improve mental well-being and physical fitness. Students may be inspired to engage in more leisure activities if they are aware of the advantages, which can enhance their cardiovascular health, muscular strength, coordination, and collaboration.

P.E. Teachers. For Physical Education instructors, this research provides insights into how traditional games can be integrated into lesson plans to improve student engagement and overall fitness. It supports the idea that traditional games are not only enjoyable but also serve as effective tools for promoting physical well-being and social interaction among students.

Department Head. The study provides department heads with useful information for creating and executing curriculum improvements. Department heads may push for the inclusion of traditional games in school activities if there is proof of their advantages, which will promote a more engaging and comprehensive approach to physical education.

Future Researchers. Future research on the effects of traditional physical activities on students' social behavior and health can use this study as a guide. It opens the door for more research on game-based exercise regimens, comparisons with contemporary fitness fads, and long-term impacts on students' health. To further understand their advantages, future researchers can build on this study by looking at various age groups, cultural effects, or game modifications.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a quasi-experimental research design, specifically the one-group pretest-posttest design, to determine the effects of classic games on the mental well-being of Bachelor of Physical Education (BPE) students at Central Philippine Adventist College (CPAC). This design allowed the researchers to measure the participants' anxiety levels before and after the intervention through the administration of a pre-test and post-test using the MHA Screening (2014) Anxiety Test.

The quasi-experimental design was considered appropriate because the researchers intended to examine whether participation in traditional or classic games could significantly influence the mental well-being of the respondents. The study involved a structured intervention in which participants engaged in one classic game for three sessions lasting 60 minutes each. The comparison of pre-test and post-test results helped determine if there was a significant change in the anxiety levels of the participants after exposure to the intervention.

The design followed the sequence below:

Pre-test → Intervention (Traditional Games) → Post-test

Before the intervention, the participants answered the anxiety test questionnaire to assess their initial mental well-being condition. After the implementation of the traditional game sessions, the same questionnaire was administered again to identify any changes in the participants' anxiety levels. The collected data were analyzed using a paired t-test to determine the significance of the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores at the 0.05 level of significance.

This research design was suitable for the study because it enabled the researchers to observe changes in mental well-being among the participants after participating in traditional games, thereby providing evidence regarding the effectiveness of classic games as a recreational activity that may contribute to reducing anxiety and promoting positive emotional health among BPE students.

Research Setting

The study was conducted at CPAC, a physical activity center located within the Central Philippine Adventist College gymnasium, also known as Noah's Ark. Central Philippine Adventist College, offers the course Bachelor of Physical Education and provides a controlled environment suitable for physical education activities. It is equipped with the necessary sports facilities and equipment to conduct the experimental tasks for the study. This setting was chosen due to its accessibility to the selected BPE students and its relevance for observing and engaging participants in physical performance tasks pertinent to the research.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 10 selected BPE students. These participants were divided into two teams, with five members in each team. Within each team, roles were assigned to ensure active engagement in the activity being observed. One player from the opposing team was designated as the pitcher (taya), while the remaining members assumed the roles of strikers and catchers.

Sampling Technique

This study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Bisht, 2024). The method was chosen to ensure that the selected BPE students at Central Philippine Adventist College (CPAC) could provide relevant information regarding the health benefits of classic games on mental well-being.

Instrumentation

The Research Instrument used was MHA Screening (2014) – The Anxiety Test. The study used the MHA Screening (2014) Anxiety Test as the instrument of research anxiety test instrument tool.

1. This standardized instrument needs to be filled out by the participants to evaluate their emotional and psychological health with a special emphasis on the signs of anxiety.
2. Pre-Test Administration Procedure: The pre-test was conducted using standardized procedures to ensure the reliability, consistency, and accuracy of the data collection process.
3. Placement of the Tool: The researchers handed out the anxiety screening surveys to the qualifying participants.
4. Orientation and Directions: The participants were given clear and concise directions before taking the test. Sample items were read and discussed to facilitate participants' comprehension of the questionnaire.
5. Test Administration: In an effort to promote honest and accurate answers, a quiet, and distraction free environment was provided to the participants to finish the questionnaire in about 15 to 20 minutes.
6. Response Collection and Verification: Upon completion of the questionnaires, the researchers collected and examined the responses to ensure completeness. Any incomplete questionnaire was returned to the respondent for completion. This process continued until all required data had been gathered before proceeding to the next stage of the study.

Validity of the Instrument

In order to ensure the fidelity of the data, the research instrument the MHA Screening (2014) Anxiety Test—was subjected to multiple validation tests. This enabled the researcher to confirm that the instrument accurately measured the constructs the study intended to assess in terms of mental well-being, such as anxiety reduction, positive affect, and changes in mood.

A panel of psychologists, educators, and clinical instructor reviewed the questionnaire and rated how well each item represented the pertinent areas of mental well-being and proposed wording changes to improve clarity and relevance or to increase cultural appropriateness (review of content validity) (Polit & Beck, 2006).

The instrument underwent construct validation by verifying that it is consistent with related theoretical frameworks, e.g., Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which focused on the psychological advantages of involvement and intrinsic motivation in activities such as traditional games.

Data Gathering Procedure

To ensure the orderly, ethical, and accurate collection of data, the researchers followed a systematic procedure consistent with the quasi-experimental research design. First, permission to conduct the study was secured from the Dean of the School of Arts, Sciences, and Education (SASEd) and the program coordinator. Second, selected BPE students were invited to participate, provided with informed consent forms, and oriented on the purpose and procedures of the study.

Upon obtaining consent, the researchers administered the pre-test. The intervention then commenced, during which the participants were divided into two groups and engaged in the slipper game. After the activity, the post-

test questionnaire was administered to assess the participants' mental well-being. This procedure was conducted over three sessions, with each session lasting 60 minutes.

Data Analysis

A paired t-test was used to evaluate student responses from pre and post treatment. The **Paired Samples t-Test** is a statistical method used to determine whether there is a significant difference between two related sets of scores obtained from the same participants. These paired measurements are typically collected at two different points in time, such as before and after an intervention. In this study, the test was used to compare the participants' pre-test and post-test scores to evaluate the effect of the intervention. (SPSS Tutorials: Paired Samples Test, 2026).

The t-test was used in this study to determine any differences between the responses of the experimental and control groups on the instrument. The t-test was conducted with student responses on the pretest and post-test CEG results. The results were analyzed to see if the findings were significant. All data were entered into Microsoft Excel and statistical analysis was performed at the 0.05 level of alpha.

Ethical Consideration

This research conformed to high ethical standards to protect the rights, dignity and welfare of the participants. Informed consent preceded participation for each participant, allowing them to be fully aware of the study objectives, procedures, risks and benefits.

Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study is voluntary and participants may discontinue participation at any point for any reasons without penalties or consequences. These ethical guidelines are in line with well recognized principles of research ethics such as respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants: Personal information and responses were maintained at all stages of the research through the application of codes and storage of data on secure servers. The potential physical and psychological risk were minimal as activities during the traditional games was closely supervised and assistance provided if necessary (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In addition, the study observed the **cultural sensitivities** on traditional games and mental health. Results were reported honestly and transparently with no fabrication or bias and used, to positively impact the knowledge of the effect of classic games on mental health (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Biblical Perspective

The Bible taught that the body is God's temple and must be cared for properly. "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?" (1 Corinthians 6:19). The active nature of traditional games created stress relief through movement and social interaction and fun activities which result in better mental health outcomes. Proverbs 17:22 also says, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Joyful and wholesome activities strengthened the mind and emotions.

White (1903) in her books *Education and Adventist Home* strongly supported the importance of recreation and balanced living. She wrote, "There is a distinction between recreation and amusement. Recreation, when true to its name, re-creation, tended to strengthen and build up." *Education*, p. 207. This proved that people can use wholesome activities which included traditional games to refresh both their minds and bodies without experiencing harm. She also emphasized the value of exercise and social interaction for health. Healthy recreation provided people with renewed energy which benefits both their body and mind according to her statement in *The Adventist Home*, p. 493. Traditional games build social bonds through cooperative play while teaching players self-discipline which resulted in positive emotional development and strengthened relationships.

RESULTS

Objective # 1. Mental Well-being of the participants before and after the Traditional game in term of gender.

Table 1

Group	Pre-test Mean	Post Test Mean	Direction of Change	Significance (p two- tailed)
Male	2.42	1.76	Decreased	0.00011883
Female	2.76	1.82	Decreased	0.000121075

In males, the mean score of mental well-being dropped from 2.42 (at pre-test) to 1.76 (at post-test), and the certification of this result is $P = 0.00011883$. This showed a positive change in mental well-being after the involvement in the traditional game among males. For the females, the mean score was 2.76 at pre-test and 1.82 at post-test, statistically significant ($p = 0.000121075$). This confirmed a marked increase in the mental well-being of the girls after the traditional game.

With males and females analyzed separately, both sexes have large decreases in score (indicating improved well-being), and with very similar t and p values. Females began with somewhat worse (higher) pre-test scores but finished with post- test scores that were essentially tied with the males', indicating that the traditional game is helpful to both genders and that for females it may even be a way to "catch up" in terms of well-being. (WHO, 2020)

The improvement in male and female scores from the pre to post assessment indicated that traditional game playing is a good means of improving mental well-being in both males and females. Traditional games often require physical activity, teamwork, and playing, which has the potential to alleviate stress, yield positive emotions, and boost social bonds all of which have been linked to improved mental health.

The similar degree of change between the males and females suggested that the game is a safe space where both genders can participate, feel validated, and reap psychological benefits. This reinforced the concept that traditional culturally familiar, cost-effective games can be utilized as a feasible approach to promote mental health in schools and communities Izquierdo et al. (2021).

Objective # 2. Comparison of Pre-test and post-test results of BPE students who engaged in traditional games.

Table 2

Question	Pre-test Mean	Interpretation	Post-test Mean	Interpretation	Mean Difference
1. I find it hard to stop or control worrying.	2.40	Needs Improvement	1.93	Low	0.47
2. I am worrying too much about different things.	2.73	High	1.67	Very Low	1.06
1. I find it hard to relax after Stressful situations.	3.00	High	1.87	Low	1.13
4. I feel being so restless that it is difficult to stay still.	2.47	High	1.93	Low	0.54
5. I become easily annoyed or irritable.	2.33	Needs Improvement	1.80	Low	0.53

6. I feel afraid, as if something bad might happen.	2.27	Needs Improvement	1.60	Very Low	0.67
7. I often anticipate the worst or feel	2.47	Needs Improvement	1.93	Low	0.54
8. I experienced feeling tense when stressed.	2.53	High/needs Improvement	1.67	Very Low	0.86
9. I loss interest or pleasure in hobbies, sports or other activities.	2.87	High	1.87	Low	1.00
10. I often feel nervous	2.47	Needs Improvement	1.53	Very Low	0.94
Over all Mean	2.55	High	1.78	Low	0.77

Table 3

Table of Specification					
Mean Score Range		Interpretation			
3.26 – 4.00		Very High / Excellent			
2.51 – 3.25		High / Good			
1.76 – 2.50		Low / Needs Improvement			
1.00 – 1.75		Very Low / Poor			

The chart showed a steady decline in average scores over all ten indicators from the pre-test ($M = 2.55$) to the post-test ($M = 1.78$). This decline trend showed a clear improvement in subscales of mental well-being after playing traditional games. A total mean difference of 0.77 indicated a large positive change after the intervention Garaigordobil et al. (2020).

Izquierdo et al.(2021) reported that traditional opposition play led to noteworthy mood state alterations in university students and pre- and post-session evaluations revealed significant decreases in negative affective components (e.g., tension, tiredness, and bewilderment) and simultaneous amelioration in positive mood subscales according to the POMS, a widely accepted psychological tool (Izquierdo et al., 2021). In line with these results, a traditional game was found to be a culturally sensitive form of physical activity which not only promoted physical fitness, but also reduced stress, increased attention and concentration and contributed to happiness and general psychological health in various ages and cultures, as reported in a systematic review in an open access health sciences journal (Martinez-de-Quel et al., 2021). Overall, these things considered, this evidence base steers endorsement of traditional games as efficacious and meaningful psycho-social tools to foster greater emotional modulation and well-being.

Objective #3. Paired Samples t-Test Results Between Pre-Test and Post-Test of BPE Students Engaged in Traditional Games

Table 4

Statistic	Pre-Test (Variable 1)	Post-Test (Variable 2)
Mean	2.55	1.78
Variance	0.0563	0.0228
Observations (n)	10	10
Pearson Correlation	0.205	—
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	—
Degrees of Freedom (df)	9	—
t-value	9.64	—
p-value (one-tailed)	0.00000243	—
p-value (two-tailed)	0.00000486	—

The paired samples t-test was run to examine if the mean pre-test and post-test scores of BPE students were significantly different after playing traditional games. The results indicated a mean reduction from 2.55 (pre-test) to 1.78 (post-test), reflecting an enhancement in the mental well-being indicators assessed after the intervention.

The calculated t-value of 9.64 is much greater than the critical t at 2.26 for the 0.05 level. Furthermore, the two-tailed p-value ($p = 0.00000486$) is significantly lower than the typical alpha value of 0.05. So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

This validated that there existed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of BPE students after playing traditional games.

The large decline in post-test mean scores demonstrated that traditional games seemed to have a significant impact on the mental health of the BPE students. Engagement in traditional games may have led to better mood, less anxiety, and greater positive affect as a result of exercise, social contact, and cultural involvement.

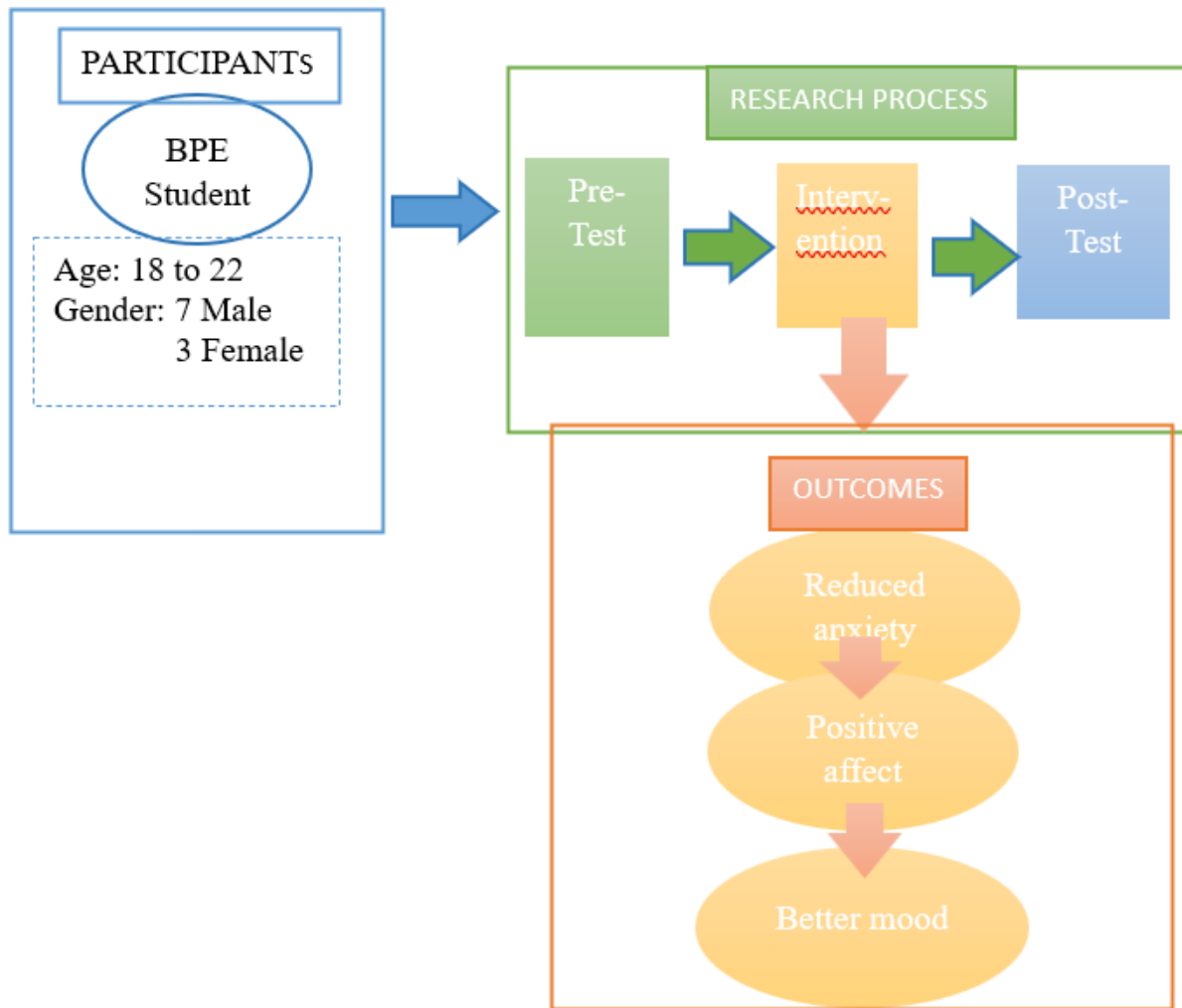
These results reinforced the premise that traditional games are not only recreational activities but also powerful psychosocial tools. These results are in line with studies that have highlighted play-based physical activities as a way to reduce stress and increase positive emotional states in students. On the whole, the findings indicated that traditional games can be adopted as a promising approach to enhancing mental health in physical education for college students, especially those specializing in BPE, which thus strongly supported the feasibility of the present research approach. Eime et al. (2015).

SYNTHESIS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework presents the process of determining the effects of traditional games on the mental well-being of BPE students. The participants of the study are BPE students aged 18 to 22, composed of both male and female respondents. The research follows a pre-test and post-test design where the participants undergo an intervention through participation in traditional games. The pre-test measures the students' initial mental well-being before the intervention, while the post-test evaluates the changes after the activity.

Figure 1



This research is conducted in view of an emerging problem presented in Chapter I; the diminishing traditional Filipino games among students, and the growing mental health problem particularly in the part of students who have sedentary, screen-based lifestyle. The present study sought to establish if playing traditional games would significantly enhance the mental well-being of BPE students. The findings reported supported a harmonious and statistically significant increase in mental well-being after participation in traditional games. For all the indicators, the post-test scores were lower than the pre-test scores, which means a decrease in anxiety-related and negative emotional symptoms. The null hypothesis was rejected as the paired samples t-test showed that these changes were not attributable to chance.

Going by gender, there were significant improvements for both male and female participants. Female students registered marginally higher pre-test anxiety levels. However, their post-test scores matched with those of the male students. It appeared that the traditional game fostered a gender-neutral and positive atmosphere where students of all genders could derive benefit from the experience. These results are consistent with previous literature demonstrating that physical social play has a positive influence on emotion regulation and reduction of stress.

The observed enhancements may be due to several intertwined factors. Traditional games need people to be physically active, and movement can activate the neurobiological pathways related with mood improvement. At the same time, these games encouraged socialization/group formation, cooperation, and fun, which led to emotional support and to feeling that a person belongs to the group. Investigation of cultural aspects also revealed that participation in the Filipino traditional games contributed to the development of identity and cultural pride, which may have acted as an indirect mechanism for enhancing psychological well-being.

Viewed through the lens of Flow Theory, these findings supported the idea that students were immersed in and enjoying the game to the point that they temporarily disengaged from academic and personal concerns. Similarly, Self-Determination Theory helped justify positive outcomes, as the games fostered intrinsic motivation, relatedness and competence three core psychological needs related to mental well-being. The results suggested that the traditional games are not simply playtime activities, but rather they are a form of meaningful psychosocial healing processes in physical education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of traditional Filipino games significantly improves the mental well-being of BPE students, particularly in reducing anxiety levels. The statistically significant decrease in post-test anxiety scores compared to pre-test results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming the effectiveness of traditional games as a psychosocial intervention. The findings also revealed that the positive effects of the intervention were experienced by both male and female students, indicating that traditional games provide an inclusive and gender-neutral approach to promoting mental well-being.

The improvement in students' mental well-being may be attributed to the combined effects of physical activity, social interaction, cooperation, and cultural engagement embedded in traditional games. These activities not only encouraged emotional support and a sense of belonging among participants but also strengthened cultural identity and pride. Furthermore, the findings support the principles of Flow Theory and Self-Determination Theory, suggesting that traditional games help students become fully engaged while satisfying their psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and intrinsic motivation.

Overall, traditional Filipino games are more than recreational activities; they are meaningful, accessible, cost-effective, and culturally relevant tools that can be integrated into physical education programs to support holistic student development and mental health. Despite the limitation of having a small sample size from a single institution, this study contributes valuable local evidence demonstrating that traditional games can serve as an effective and culturally grounded strategy for enhancing student mental well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section outlines key recommendations based on the findings and limitations of the study, offering guidance for practice, research, and policy to enhance students' mental well-being through the use of traditional games.

College Students. Encourage to actively participate in traditional games when offered in physical education or recreational settings, recognizing the dual benefits for mental well-being (stress reduction, mood improvement) and physical fitness (cardiovascular health, strength, coordination). Beyond formal classes, students may initiate peer-led traditional game sessions during break times or through student organization activities, fostering social connection and making leisure time more engaging and culturally meaningful. By self-monitoring changes in stress and mood before and after playing traditional games, students can personally validate the positive effects, which in turn increases long-term motivation to remain physically active.

P.E. Teachers. Physical Education teachers are recommended to integrate traditional games at regular intervals within their lesson plans, using them as warm-ups, main activities, or cool-downs to improve student engagement, reduce anxiety (especially among less motivated students), and promote teamwork in a fun, low-pressure environment. Teachers should also document their observations of student behavior, participation levels, and emotional responses during traditional game sessions, as these informal records help tailor game selection to class needs and provide qualitative evidence to share with department heads. Furthermore, collaborating with students to reintroduce local or indigenous games from their own communities increases cultural relevance, student ownership, and sense of pride.

Department Heads. Department heads and curriculum developers are urged to formally include traditional games in the physical education curriculum as a required or elective module, emphasizing their role in holistic student development. Given the cost-effectiveness of traditional games compared to modern fitness equipment,

department heads should allocate resources for minimal necessary items such as stones, chalk, ropes, and small balls. Organizing school-wide traditional game events or tournaments can build community involvement, cultural pride, and cross-year student interaction, while also providing opportunities to collect preliminary data on student well-being. Additionally, department heads should encourage P.E. faculty to share best practices and conduct peer observations of traditional game implementation, fostering a collaborative approach to curriculum innovation.

Future Researchers. For future researchers, it would be advisable to conduct further studies to overcome the limitation of this study. The findings may be replicated, including larger and more heterogeneous samples from various institutions to increase the external validity of the results. Studying more traditional games and executing longer interventions could provide more insights into their diverse effects on students' mental well-being. It is also suggested that mixed method research designs be employed to capture not only quantitative results, but also the lived experiences, perceptions and emotional responses of students. Prospective research could also investigate the enduring effects on mental health of engaging in traditional games, as well as perform comparative studies with modern-day physical activity or fitness-focused interventions to assess relative efficacy.

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