

The Impact of Physical Education (PE) As a Minor Subject on the Social Wellness of College Students in Selected Heis in Butuan City

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of Physical Education (PE) as a minor subject on the social wellness of college students in Butuan City. Specifically, it determined how participation in PE influences students' social wellness in terms of interpersonal relationships, communication skills, teamwork, cooperation, respect for others, social connectedness, and overall social well-being. The study was conducted within the context of the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) proposed revisions to the General Education (GE) curriculum, which include possible changes to the structure and number of GE courses. However, since these revisions were still under consultation and had not been fully implemented during the conduct of the study, Physical Education remained a required component of the curriculum in many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The study employed a quantitative descriptive research design involving 53 college students enrolled in Physical Education courses from selected Higher Education Institutions in Butuan City. A structured questionnaire was utilized to collect data on students' perceptions of the influence of PE on their social wellness. Descriptive statistical tools, including frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation, were used to analyze and interpret the data.

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Physical Education positively influences their social wellness. Students reported that PE enhanced their active participation, encouraged interaction with classmates, strengthened teamwork and cooperation, improved communication skills, increased confidence in social interactions, fostered respect for others, helped build positive friendships, developed a stronger sense of belonging, and promoted social connectedness. Overall, 84.9% of the respondents agreed that Physical Education has contributed positively to their social well-being, indicating that PE serves as an effective avenue for developing interpersonal and social skills alongside physical fitness.

The study concludes that Physical Education, even as a minor subject, plays a significant role in promoting the social wellness of college students by providing meaningful opportunities for collaboration, communication, and relationship building. These findings underscore the value of maintaining Physical Education as an integral component of higher education curricula. The study recommends that Higher Education Institutions and educational policymakers consider the demonstrated social wellness benefits of Physical Education when evaluating future curriculum revisions and educational policies, particularly in light of the proposed changes to the General Education curriculum.

Keywords: Impact, Physical Education, Minor Subject, Social Wellness, College Students, Interpersonal Relationships, Teamwork, Communication Skills, Higher Education Institutions, Butuan City

INTRODUCTION

Physical Education (PE) has traditionally been valued for its role in promoting students' physical health and fitness, but an increasing body of research highlights its broader contributions to social development. In higher education settings, PE courses provide structured opportunities for students to engage in collaborative and cooperative activities that enhance interpersonal relationships, communication, and teamwork—key components of social wellness important for both personal and professional success. Studies have demonstrated that

participation in PE programs can significantly improve social skills such as companionship, cooperation, self-control, and adaptation among college students (Wang & Sugiyama, 2014). Other research underscores the role of PE in fostering communication, leadership, and interpersonal competencies that extend beyond physical fitness (Saeed et al., 2026).

Social wellness, defined as the ability to form satisfying relationships and adapt to diverse social environments, is a critical dimension of students' overall well-being. For college students, developing social competencies contributes to a stronger sense of belonging, reduced feelings of isolation, and enhanced academic engagement (Wang & Sugiyama, 2014; Saeed et al., 2026). Within PE settings, activities such as team games, cooperative tasks, and group exercises create contexts in which students must communicate, resolve conflict, and work towards shared goals—experiences that naturally support social development (Yashpal, 2022).

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has proposed revisions to the General Education (GE) curriculum, including changes to subject structures that may affect the inclusion of minors like Physical Education. However, these proposed revisions remain under consultation and have not yet been fully implemented across Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). As a result, many HEIs in contexts such as Butuan City continue to require PE as part of their approved curricula. This current status provides an important academic setting in which to assess the ongoing impact of PE on students' social wellness.

This study focuses on college students enrolled in institutions where PE is still a curricular requirement, with the goal of examining how participation in PE as a minor subject influences social wellness. Given the ongoing discussions about curriculum reform, empirical evidence on the social value of PE can inform educators, administrators, and policymakers about the potential benefits of maintaining PE in higher education programs.

Objectives Of The Study

This study aims to examine the impact of Physical Education (PE) as a minor subject on the social wellness of college students in selected HEIs in Butuan City.

General Objective

To determine the impact of Physical Education (PE) as a minor subject on the social wellness of college students in Butuan City.

Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Determine the level of students' participation in Physical Education as a minor as perceived by the students.
2. Assess the level of students' social wellness in terms of communication, teamwork, cooperation, respect for others, social connectedness, sense of belonging, and overall social well-being.
3. Identify the aspects of Physical Education that students perceive as having the greatest contribution to their social wellness and use these findings as the basis for recommendations for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and curriculum planners, particularly in light of the proposed revisions to the General Education curriculum.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to examine the perceived impact of Physical Education (PE) as a minor subject on the social wellness of college students in Butuan City, Philippines. A survey questionnaire was utilized to collect data on students' perceptions of the contribution of PE to various dimensions of social wellness, including interpersonal relationships, communication, teamwork, cooperation, social connectedness, sense of belonging, and overall social well-being. The following sections describe the research design, study setting, participants, research instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and data analysis employed in the study.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to determine the impact of Physical Education (PE) as a minor subject on the social wellness of college students in Butuan City. A descriptive research design is appropriate when the purpose of the study is to systematically describe the characteristics, perceptions, or behaviors of a population without manipulating the variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It enables researchers to obtain information regarding existing conditions and describe phenomena as they naturally occur (Polit & Beck, 2021).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Butuan City, Philippines. Data were collected from college students enrolled in Higher Education Institutions within the city through direct distribution of questionnaires and online survey platforms. The study was not limited to a single institution, allowing the inclusion of respondents from different colleges and universities in Butuan City.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 53 college students enrolled in selected Higher Education Institutions in Butuan City during the conduct of the study. Participants were selected using convenience sampling, based on their availability and willingness to participate. Eligible respondents were currently enrolled in college and had experience taking Physical Education as part of their curriculum.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed structured questionnaire. The instrument was designed based on the objectives of the study and relevant literature on Physical Education and social wellness. The use of Likert-scale questionnaires is widely accepted for measuring respondents' attitudes, perceptions, and opinions in quantitative research (Likert, 1932; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale with the following verbal interpretations:

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 3 – Neutral
- 4 – Agree
- 5 – Strongly Agree

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Prior to data collection, the questionnaire underwent content validation by experts in Physical Education and social science research to ensure its relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study objectives. Content validity ensures that the instrument adequately represents the construct being measured (Polit & Beck, 2021). A pilot test was conducted to establish the reliability of the instrument, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed to assess internal consistency. According to Taber (2018), Cronbach's alpha values of 0.70 or higher generally indicate acceptable reliability.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher distributed the questionnaire directly to college students who met the inclusion criteria of the study. Respondents were approached through face-to-face distribution and online platforms, depending on their accessibility. Before answering the questionnaire, participants were informed about the purpose and objectives

of the study, the estimated time required to complete the survey, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Only those who voluntarily agreed to participate were included in the study. After completion, the questionnaires were checked for completeness, coded, and organized for statistical analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were provided with information regarding the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and the intended use of the collected data. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Respondents were assured that they could decline participation or withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

To protect participants' privacy, no personally identifiable information, such as names, student identification numbers, or contact details, was collected. All responses were treated with strict confidentiality, reported only in aggregate form, and used solely for academic and research purposes. The researcher ensured that the study adhered to the ethical principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and respect for participants throughout the research process.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, and standard deviation. Frequency and percentage describe the distribution of responses, while the weighted mean summarizes the average perception of respondents and the standard deviation measures the variability of responses (Field, 2018).

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULT

The findings indicate that the respondents generally have a highly positive perception of the role of Physical Education (PE) in enhancing their social wellness. Across all ten indicators, the majority of the 53 respondents selected either Agree or Strongly Agree, suggesting that PE contributes significantly to students' social interaction, teamwork, communication, confidence, and sense of belonging. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that college physical activity classes promote social interaction, teamwork, and well-being.

Profile of the Respondents

The study involved a total of 53 college students drawn from selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Butuan City. The respondents were predominantly within the 18–20 years old age group (45.3%), followed by those aged 21–23 years old (37.7%), indicating that the sample largely represents traditional undergraduate students. Female respondents comprised 79.2%, while 20.8% were male. In terms of year level, respondents were relatively evenly distributed across first year (26.4%), second year (26.4%), and third year (26.4%), with fourth year students accounting for 17.0% and practicing professionals comprising 3.8%. Respondents came from various academic programs, reflecting diversity in academic backgrounds and strengthening the applicability of the findings across disciplines.

Part 2: Social Wellness

Table 1: Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation of Social Wellness Indicators

Based on the responses of 53 college students, the weighted means and standard deviations for each indicator of social wellness influenced by Physical Education (PE) are presented below. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Social Wellness Indicator	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Active participation in PE classes	4.10	1.27	Agree

Interaction with classmates	4.10	1.18	Agree
Enjoyment of group activities	4.07	1.22	Agree
Motivation toward an active lifestyle	3.97	1.17	Agree
Teamwork and cooperation	4.15	1.18	Agree
Improvement of communication skills	3.93	1.06	Agree
Increased confidence in interacting with others	3.95	1.07	Agree
Building positive friendships	3.97	0.98	Agree
Sense of belonging	3.80	1.11	Agree
Ability to work with different people	3.92	1.08	Agree
Strengthened respect and cooperation	4.00	1.10	Agree
Social connectedness	4.03	1.09	Agree
Overall contribution to social well-being	4.00	1.11	Agree

Participation in Physical Education

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for indicators related to students' participation in Physical Education (PE) as a minor subject.

Active participation in PE classes obtained a weighted mean of 4.10 (SD = 1.27), indicating that students generally agree that they are actively engaged during PE sessions. Similarly, interaction with classmates yielded a weighted mean of 4.10 (SD = 1.18), suggesting that PE provides consistent opportunities for peer interaction.

Students also reported positive perceptions of enjoyment in group activities (WM = 4.07, SD = 1.22) and motivation toward an active lifestyle (WM = 3.97, SD = 1.17). These findings suggest that PE classes not only encourage physical engagement but also foster enthusiasm for collaborative and health-oriented activities. The relatively moderate standard deviation values indicate acceptable variability and response consistency across respondents.

Social Wellness Outcomes of Physical Education

Participation in PE was perceived to positively influence communication skills, with a weighted mean of 3.93 (SD = 1.06). Likewise, confidence in interacting with others recorded a weighted mean of 3.95 (SD = 1.07). These results indicate that PE activities, particularly team-based and cooperative exercises, create environments conducive to verbal interaction, coordination, and social confidence-building.

Among all indicators, teamwork and cooperation registered the highest weighted mean at 4.15 (SD = 1.18), underscoring PE's strong contribution to collaborative skill development. Similarly, strengthened respect and cooperation with classmates obtained a weighted mean of 4.00 (SD = 1.10). These findings demonstrate that PE effectively promotes mutual respect, fairness, responsibility, and shared accountability through structured group activities.

Indicators related to social integration also yielded positive results. Social connectedness recorded a weighted mean of 4.03 (SD = 1.09), while sense of belonging obtained a slightly lower yet still favorable weighted mean of 3.80 (SD = 1.11). The higher variability observed in sense of belonging suggests that while most students feel

included in PE settings, the extent of this experience may differ across individuals, highlighting the need for inclusive instructional strategies.

Overall, the contribution of Physical Education to students' social well-being recorded a weighted mean of 4.00 (SD = 1.11). This result confirms that PE positively influences multiple dimensions of social wellness simultaneously, rather than affecting isolated social skills alone.

Synthesis of Findings

Across all measured indicators, weighted mean scores ranged from 3.80 to 4.15, all falling within the *Agree* category. Standard deviation values ranging from 0.98 to 1.27 indicate reasonable consistency in students' perceptions. These findings provide quantitative evidence that Physical Education, even as a minor subject, contributes meaningfully to students' social wellness.

By reporting both weighted means and standard deviations, the study strengthens its analytical rigor and responds directly to calls for precision in educational research. The results support the continued inclusion of Physical Education in higher education curricula, particularly as policymakers evaluate proposed revisions to the General Education program.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Physical Education (PE) as a minor subject positively contributes to the social wellness of college students in Butuan City. The findings indicate that students perceive PE as an important component of their holistic development, providing opportunities to strengthen interpersonal relationships, enhance communication skills, foster teamwork and cooperation, promote respect for others, and develop a greater sense of belonging and social connectedness. These outcomes demonstrate that the value of Physical Education extends beyond physical fitness by supporting students' social and personal growth through meaningful interaction and collaborative learning experiences.

The consistently positive perceptions of the respondents underscore the role of PE in creating an inclusive learning environment that encourages positive peer relationships and the development of essential social competencies. As higher education institutions continue to review and enhance their curricula, the social wellness benefits identified in this study provide evidence that Physical Education remains a valuable component of the General Education program. Therefore, curriculum planners and educational policymakers should consider preserving and strengthening PE offerings to support the holistic development of college students and promote their overall well-being.

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