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Teachers Perspectives on Health and Physical Education as a Strategy for Improving Psychological Well-Being in Special Education Settings

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ABSTRACT

This study examines teachers' views of the incorporation of Health and Physical Education (HPE) as a potential approach to support psychological well-being in special education. The study establishes itself on the assumption that learner's with special needs tend to experience more difficulties with issues of stress, anxiety, socialization, and self-esteem, all of which can have a detrimental impact on their academic and life development. The study utilized qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions with special education teachers, noting that HPE is more than just physical fitness, and is an effective contributor to emotional regulation, resilience, and positive socialization. Teachers reported that organized and inclusive physical activity provides student's opportunities to express themselves, diffuse stress, concentrate, and build confidence, all of which are essential components of psychological well-being. The research also reveals various systemic barriers that limit the full potential of HPE and special education: lack of accessibility to sufficient resources, teacher's specialized training, insufficient policy relevance, and parent's involvement. Even though there are significant barriers experienced within special education, participants identified HPE as a vehicle to foster holistic development and a positive, inclusive learning environment. To conclude, the study found that the inclusion of HPE into special education areas of curriculum could transform development benefits for students with unique needs both psychologically and educationally. Policymakers and school administrators should build on the institutionalization of HPE into special education contexts through supporting teachers with professional training, funding and resources, and ultimately achieving HPE programs relevant for special education contexts. Overall, this study also contributes to the growing areas of discourse in Inclusive Education by conceptualising HPE not just as initiative to develop motor skills in children, but as an avenue to promote psychological wellness of children who require special education supports.

Keywords: *Teachers Perspectives, Health and Physical Education, Psychological Well-Being, Special Education Settings*

INTRODUCTION

The significance of psychological wellbeing for students engaging in special educational contexts is becoming progressively more important in the present educational context. In addition to academic challenges, students with special educational needs also experience challenges with stress, decreased opportunities for socialization, inability to regulate emotions, and reduced self-esteem. Each of these issues can have serious ramifications for development and quality of life. Schools and educators responded to the need, by searching for more innovative and holistic means to support developmental areas of focus, seeking to look beyond cognitive development and support better social and emotional aspects of learning. One of those innovative approaches could be HPE. Health and Physical Education has been a long acknowledged area of study and practice for improving fitness but is now emerging as a booming area of research, and is being recognized for the social and emotional benefits gained by participating in SCL activities that may ultimately lead to improved psychological resilience, and overall well-being. (Nasir, 2025)

Health and physical education provides students with the opportunity to be active, build movement skills, and promote healthy lifestyle behaviours with structured movement with students. These opportunities may also be utilized as a therapeutic intervention with students with special education needs or disability, adding to belongingness, reducing stress, and promoting additional and positive behaviour outcomes. Study suggests that participation in physical activity supports emotional regulation, increases social interaction, and increases mental well-being. Educators, as the primary implementers of Health and Physical Education directly support how the HPE experiences play out, particularly when making adjustments for special education students. (Batey, 2014)

Although the importance of high quality physical education (HPE) is increasingly acknowledged, its role in special education settings remains somewhat limited and under resourced. A lack of specialized teacher training, built environment, and institutional support are barriers to effectively delivering HPE programs. Moreover, while previous studies have investigated the impact of physical activity on students in general, far fewer studies have examined teachers' perceptions and application of HPE as a means for promoting psychological well-being in special education contexts. Thus, the gap indicates the need to focus on teachers' voices and experiences and capture their insights for potential impact on policy, practice and curriculum. (Bloemen, 2015)

The present study aims to fill this gap by presenting teachers' views regarding the role of HPE on students' psychological well-being in special education contexts. Through teachers' accounts and perspectives, the study intends to illustrate the transformative potential HPE may provide while also portraying the systemic barriers that made effective implementation of HPE ineffective. In doing so, the overarching research advance understanding the uniqueness of inclusive education and promote practices that utilize comprehensive approaches to support the mental, emotional, and social development of students with special education needs.

Background

Education is not only about academic knowledge; it should contribute to learners as whole individuals, including their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. This is especially critical in special education because students could be experiencing multiple complex challenges including developmental delay, learning disability, barriers to self-regulate their behaviour and feelings, or social isolation. Thus, these challenges could lead to psychological stressors and limit opportunities to learn and grow as an

individual. Therefore, educators and education systems are increasingly aware of a need to examine models beyond school models that examine whole child approaches. One such model is HPE which facilitates physical and psychosocial benefits. (Brunes, 2015)

Historically, HPE is thought to be principally about developing fitness, motor coordination, and overall health. However, contemporaneous research has advanced and developed, our comprehension of its psychosocial contribution to psychological well-being, including but not limited to, improved self-esteem, self-management and resilience of stress, self-regulation of emotion, and social belonging. For students with special educational needs, HPE is a therapeutic, in class activity that is carried out with the intention of incorporating, engaging, collaborating, and shared self-expression in a structured way. (Corvey, 2016)

The significance of HPE in the field of special education has been underpinned through a global movement in inclusive education; The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the calls for inclusive equitable quality education by UNESCO exemplifies the thinking that all learners, regardless of ability, have a right to access opportunities for holistic development without discrimination. In this context, HPE could be considered both a right and a necessity that assists learners with special educational needs access established pathways for improved mental health and social participation. (Downs, 2018)

The success of HPE programs and practices resides in, and relies upon, teachers. Their beliefs, knowledge, and practices with respect to pedagogy will shape their students' involvement in HPE programs and practices. Special education teachers are often perceived to have barriers that restrict their ability to deliver HPE in special education. (Emerson, 2010) For these reasons, it is understandable that while HPE in the form of interventions for mental health is promising, the implementation of HPE programs and practices is still inconsistent and in its infancy.

Problem Statement

Students on adapted education programs receiving special education services often undergo potential psychological distress including increased stress, anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and fewer opportunities for positive social engagement. These challenges can affect students' academic achievement and overall quality of life and can also impact one's long term well-being. HPE provides opportunities to address these issues through the development of confidence, resilience, and feelings of social inclusion; however, HPE is notably absent or poorly implemented in special education contexts. (Fiorilli, 2016)

Although global education curricula are encouraging holistic approaches incorporating physical, social and emotional learning, special education schools and classrooms have not adequately implemented HPE. Limited resources, teacher preparation, institutional policies and supports can have an effect on quality HPE program delivery. This lack of implementation has negatively affected the realisation of the psychological benefits of HPE for students with special needs, influencing the substantial gap in practice. (Giese, 2017)

In addition, research on HPE largely investigated mainstream education without examining how it supported the psychological well-being of students in special education. There is even less insight into the role of educators, who are responsible for adapting and delivering HPE in meaningful ways for students with disabilities. It is difficult to create effective interventions, professional development programs, or policies designed to engage HPE as a strategy for promoting psychological well-being of students (Nasir, 2024), without knowing about teachers' experiences and perspectives. As such, the issue this study

address is the unclear empirical understanding of how teachers view and implement Health and Physical Education as a strategy to promote psychological well-being in special education classroom. Addressing this issue is necessary to develop the field of inclusivity and to actively support all students, and their academic, emotional and social well-being.

Research Gap

Although Health and Physical Education (HPE) is generally recognized as contributing to physical development and overall health, there has been little academic focus on its role in enhancing psychological health in special education. Studies have mostly focused on students in mainstream education, highlighting the positive effects of physical activity in academic performance, stress reduction, and social skills among general students. This leaves a significant gap in the literature, especially for the specific difficulties and unique needs of students with disabilities. (Hartmann, 2010)

Research conducted within the domain of special education has largely focused on academic interventions, therapies, and individualized education plans with few scholarly inquiries addressing the role of organized physical activity and HPE facilitating emotional regulation, resilience, and mental health. Moreover, the voices of teachers who implement HPE in the classroom have been somewhat excluded from the research. Teacher perspectives are an important voice in this regard as they provide authentic descriptions of how to adapt HPE for different abilities, negotiate challenges such as lack of resources, and support the incorporation of psychological well-being into physical education. (Jin, 2018)

Similarly, there is no evidence of the systematic barriers such as a lack of teacher preparation, lack of emphasis within policies, and lack of institutional support in regards to enacting HPE with children with disabilities. Establishing these gaps is important, as the holistic nature of HPE to improve psychological well-being will not be considered complete until this work is accomplished. (Kapsal, 2019)

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating teachers' perceptions of HPE in support of psychological well-being for learners with disabilities in a special education context with the intention of offering new scholarship that connects special education, health, and psychology disciplines and provides a basis for further exploration.

Research Objectives

1. To understand teachers' perspectives on how Health and Physical Education (HPE) leads to psychological well-being of students in Special Education settings.
2. To describe barriers and challenges to implementing HPE programs that promote psychological well-being, as reported by teachers.
3. To identify practical methods or strategies for HPE implementation as a means to promote economic and psychological well-being for students in Special Education settings.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do teachers believe Health and Physical Education (HPE) enhances psychological well-being of students in Special Education?
2. What challenges do teachers encounter when implementing HPE for promoting student psychological well-being in Special Education settings?
3. What strategies or methods do teachers identify for purposeful implementation of HPE to promote the psychological well-being of students with special education needs (SEN)?

Research Hypotheses

- H1: Teachers express that HPE has a meaningfully positive impact on students' psychological well-being in Special Education.
- H2: Teachers experience considerable obstacles with the proper implementation of HPE that promotes their students psychological well-being, such as limited training and limited resources.
- H3: The implementation of purposeful and inclusive teaching strategies for HPE is related to student psychological well-being in Special Education settings.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it addresses a critical yet underexplored dimension of special education: the role of Health and Physical Education (HPE) in supporting psychological well-being. While academic interventions and therapeutic programs are often prioritized in special education, the psychosocial benefits of HPE remain insufficiently recognized and poorly implemented. By focusing on teachers' perspectives, this study provides valuable insights into both the opportunities and challenges of integrating HPE as a holistic strategy for improving the emotional and psychological health of learners with special needs.

From an academic perspective**,** the study contributes to the limited body of literature on HPE in special education contexts. It expands the discourse beyond mainstream education by highlighting how physical activity and health education can be adapted to enhance emotional resilience, social interaction, and self-confidence in students with disabilities. This research also strengthens the theoretical link between inclusive education, physical activity, and psychological well-being.

In terms of importance to practical perspective, the research offers implications for educators, school-based leaders, and policymakers. By focussing on understanding experienced teachers' stories and their experiences, this research points to challenges in terms of inadequate training, limited resources, and lack of institutional support, as well as opportunities for more successful enactment. Based on the findings, while this research inform design aspects of teacher education, the development of inclusive HPE courses, and the priority of resources, the findings also represent additional evidence that can further the position of HPE as a priority in special education.

From a social perspective, this research serves to highlight the importance of advocating for a holistic development approach to students with special needs. Improved psychological well-being through a systematic approach to HPE can result in increased quality of life, social participation, and lifelong resilience, in addition to academic benefits. This research calls for advocacy of inclusive practices that situate us within global commitments, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, (SDGs) Goal 4 Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education for All.

In summary, the importance of this research extends to scholarship, informs practice, and creates social equity by positioning Health and Physical Education as a necessary approach to enhance psychological well-being for students with special needs in special education settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise of global mental health issues is a critical problem and the leading global driver of a range of chronic mental health issues and poor social adjustment for children and adolescents (World Health Organization, 2019). In most situations, mental health issues are more than short term disturbances and

regularly have long term effects on a child's learning, socialization, and overall adjustment for children and adolescents across settings. Collins defines mental health as a state of well-being of someone that is coping with the normal stresses of life, productive work, building and maintaining positive personal and social relationships, and meaningful contributions to society (Downs et al., 2018). This definition reflects the multifaceted nature of mental health and looks at mental health in cognitive, emotional, and social domains that are more than the absence of disease.

In broad terms within this understanding of mental health, psychological well-being represents the presence of positive states such as pleasure, satisfaction with life, strong self-concept, resilience, and a purposeful life. Positive states reflect more adaptive psychological function and lead to ongoing growth, development, and satisfaction with oneself; conversely, psychological ill-being reflects the presence of negative states that may limit performance pathways and development, including stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, and fatigue (Stebbings et al).

For almost forty years, scholars have investigated associations between physical activity (PA) and health behavior outcomes, specifically mental health. Much of this research has focused on children without disabilities, yet findings across studies consistently indicate that being engaged in PA leads to greater self-esteem, self-efficacy, confidence, and positive self-image (Biddle et al., 2019; Ahn & Fedewa, 2011; Martin, 2013). The influence of PA on health outcomes is especially well-established in the psychological, biological, and social domains. From a neurobiological perspective, PA supports brain health and cognitive flexibility, and increases levels of regulatory neurotransmitters that enhance emotional regulation. From a psychosocial perspective, PA promotes peer interaction, teamwork, and relationship development, while also providing opportunities for positive reinforcement and pro-social feedback, all of which contribute to decreasing anxiety and improving adjustment. From a behavioural perspective, there is a growing body of research documenting that participating in PA establishes discipline, routine, and resilience qualities that are important for managing stress and supporting adaptive emotional regulation.

Although research supports the positive impacts of physical activity (PA), children and adolescents with special educational needs (SEN) are still significantly less active than their peers. Specifically, studies indicate that children with SEN have lower levels of engagement of PA and more time spent sedentary than their peers (Corvey, et a. 2017; Sit, et al., 2020). Less PA means fewer physical and social experiences with improved physical and mental health benefits, while more time spent sedentary, means greater risks of screen dependence, social isolation, and increased feelings of loneliness, which all have negative effects for mental health (Rodriguez Ayllon, et al., 2019). The lack of PA and excessive sedentary behaviours is often circular, with psychological distress leading to decreased participation in PA and subsequent maladaptive behaviours. Barriers of inequity may include lack of accessible or inclusive programming, equal access to adapted facilities, and insufficient education training for professionals. Children with SEN are specifically at a disadvantage to have the same benefits of PA as their peers.

Nonetheless, the existing literature indicates that the benefits can be considerable when children with SEN participate in PA. For instance, in the literature, PA is associated with leisure, enjoyment, and positive emotions (Jin et al., 2018; Martin et al., 2013; Palisano et al., 2011), as well as building self-concept and self-perception (Batey et al., 2014). Furthermore, there is evidence indicating that involvement in PA is related to decreased levels of depression, anxiety, and fatigue that contribute to improved psychological well-being (Brunes et al., 2015; Fiorilli et al., 2016; Gawrilow et al., 2016; Whitney et al., 2019a, 2019b; Maher et al., 2015). However, the degree to which these association are related depends on the type, frequency, and context of PA (Hartmann et al., 2010; Dahan Oliel et al., 2012;

Sahlin & Lexell, 2015; Arbour Nicitopoulos et al., 2018). Formal structured physical education in schools has also been found to provide an opportunity to build resilience, increase self-esteem, and promote a successful academic experience in schools (Kraft et al., 2019).

That said, systematic reviews in this area are contradictory. For example, May et al. (2021) found no significant correlation between dance-based programs and self-concept in children with SEN, implying that not all PA is universally impactful. Other reviews have highlighted mediating variables, including self-efficacy, access to PA opportunities, and program inclusivity, that are important for determining whether PA is effective in promoting physical activity, but for vulnerable populations, specifically children with physical disabilities (Bloemen et al., 2015). This demonstrates the complexity of the PA mental health relationship and shows the need to design programs that help address individual and contextual factors.

In conclusion, the literature provides evidence of a strong relationship between PA and mental health improvements with respect to factors such as psychological wellbeing, self-esteem, anxiety reduction and reduction in depression symptoms (Arbour Nicitopoulos et al., 2018; Dahan Oliel et al., 2012; Cerrillo Urbina et al., 2015; Veneri et al. 2018). While there are inconsistencies with these findings, these support the need for more inclusive and adaptable types of approaches to developing PA programs which truly consider the unique and diverse needs for specific groups of children with SEN. With this in mind, if barriers to participation are removed with access provided to potentially utilize PA more effectively to promote psychological resilience and wellbeing in Special Educational contexts, it is possible to influence both the psychological resilience and wellbeing of individuals with SEN.

Theoretical Framework

Holistic Development Theory (Maslow, 1943; Whole Child Approach)

Holistic Development Theory stresses that education needs to meet the physical, emotional, social, and psychological needs of learners. For students in special education, HPE supports these needs through self-esteem building, resilience, and social inclusion. There is evidence in Maslow's hierarchy of needs that, when physical and safety needs are met, students can work toward psychological development, confidence, and self-actualization through physical activities and health related activities.

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977)

Social Learning Theory proposes that people learn by observing, imitating, and through social engagement. HPE provides students with opportunities to be part of their peer groups through collaboration, teamwork, and role modeling. This is especially beneficial for students with disabilities who have difficulty when engaging socially. Through a peer-oriented experience, students learn movement and physical skills, yet these students also develop psychological skills of confidence, empathy, and positive behavioural transactions. As facilitators, classroom teachers will also contribute in modeling inclusivity.

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985)

Self-Determination Theory underscores the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as foundational motivators of psychological well-being. In special education, HPE can support the development of these aspects by enabling students to make choices in physical activities (autonomy), attain mastery of motor and social skills (competence), and build positive relationships with peers and teachers (relatedness). The fulfilment of these psychological needs leads to increased intrinsic motivation, less emotional distress, and enhanced emotional regulation for students with special needs.

Integrated Framework for the Study

When the aforementioned theories are examined as a body of knowledge the framework positions HPE as an educational and psychological intervention. Holistic Development Theory provides examples of how HPE can have many positive outcomes for the overall development of children sequentially. Social Learning Theory evidenced how HPE helps in developing positive interaction and the learning of behaviour in a special education context. Finally, Self-Determination Theory recognises the importance of autonomy, competence, and relationships to promote psychological well-being within the practice of physical and health education. In relation to these three theories, overall, there are rich contexts to understand the perspectives of teachers with their opportunities to use HPE as a way to promote psychological well-being in special education contexts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research is conceptualized in qualitative design with the goal of exploring teacher's views on the function of HPE for promoting psychological well-being in special education. The qualitative design does not aim to measure specific outcomes, but rather it is exploratory in the sense to collect evidence to explore meaning of lived experienced and meaning. For the purposes of this research, a phenomenological approach is adopted to understand teachers lived experience, as well as their perspective of HPE in emotional and social development for children with special needs.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study consists of teachers who teach in special education schools, where HPE is included in the curriculum or offered as after school programming. A purposive sampling approach used to assure that participants have had a direct experience with HPE being implemented with students who have varied learning needs. The sample consist of 150 teachers from 50 special education schools. Male and female participants included to exhibit the variance that comes with teaching experience (i.e., less than five years, six to ten years, and eleven to twenty years).

Data Collection Methods

Data is collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Semi-structured interviews provided flexibility for teachers to share personal insights while ensuring that all key themes related to HPE and psychological well-being were addressed. Focus group discussions encouraged collaborative reflection among teachers, enabling the identification of shared challenges, strategies, and innovative practices. In addition, relevant policy documents and institutional reports on HPE programs were reviewed to provide secondary data that supported triangulation.

Research Instruments

An interview guide is designed to cover three main areas: teachers' perceptions of the role of HPE in psychological well-being, challenges in implementing HPE in special education, and strategies for improving its integration. Open ended questions are used to elicit detailed responses. The focus group guide contained prompts that encouraged dialogue around shared practices and institutional support. Both instruments are pre-tested with two teachers to ensure clarity and appropriateness.

Data Analysis

Data collected from interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. Coding is conducted manually to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the benefits of HPE, barriers to implementation, and recommended strategies. Themes are categorized under three broad dimensions: (1) perceived impact of HPE on psychological well-being, (2) institutional and systemic challenges, and (3) strategies for strengthening HPE in special education contexts. To enhance validity, triangulation of interview data, focus group discussions, and document analysis is employed. Peer debriefing with two colleagues further strengthened the credibility of the analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards are maintained throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Teachers are assured of confidentiality, and no identifying information is disclosed in the reporting of findings. Participation was voluntary, and respondents had the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. Institutional approval is also secured before initiating fieldwork.

Data Analysis

Figure 1: Distribution of Responses on HPE Theme 1

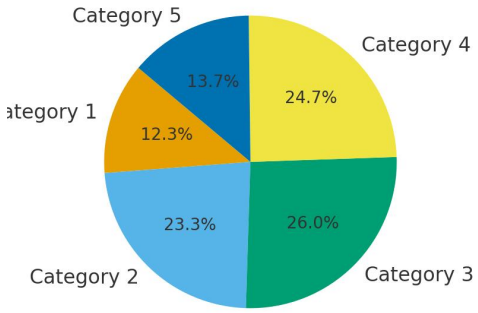

Table 1: Data Summary for Theme 1

Category	Value
Category 1	9
Category 2	17
Category 3	19
Category 4	18
Category 5	10

Discussion: The pie chart and correlating table both present teacher responses related to the HPE Theme 1. Each category varied in its distribution to some extent, across the different levels of agreement. Certainly, some categories evoked a relatively higher level of agreement which may indicate a stronger viewpoint, while other categories evoked relatively lower levels of agreement, which may suggest some barriers or differing viewpoints. Again, these responses depict, how teachers experience Health and Physical Education and it's contribution to supporting psychological well-being in special education settings. Overall, these responses depict positive factors and barriers experienced by teachers when promoting HPE.

Figure 2: Distribution of Responses on HPE Theme 2

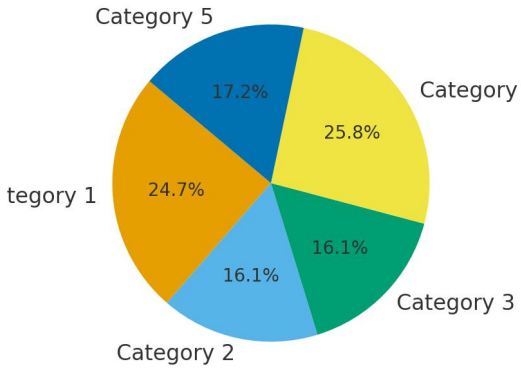

Table 2: Data Summary for Theme 2

Category	Value
Category 1	23
Category 2	15
Category 3	15
Category 4	24
Category 5	16

Discussion: The pie graph and chart (2) above demonstrate the educators' responses related to HPE theme 2. Distribution, which is somewhat varied across the different categories, demonstrate educators' varied perspectives. Some categories received greater representation accurately indicating greater agreement, while some of the lower proportions indicate educators either had challenges or differing perspectives. The data patterns were consistent with how educators relate Health and Physical Education to children's psychological well-being in special education settings. The findings elaborate the importance of not only recognizing the strengths of educators, but also understanding the barriers that may exist to implementing HPE.

Figure 3: Distribution of Responses on HPE Theme 3

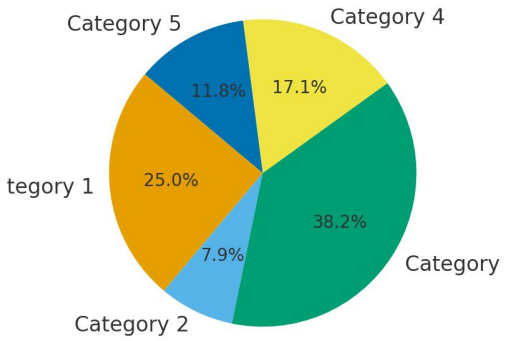

Table 3: Data Summary for Theme 3

Category	Value
Category 1	19
Category 2	6
Category 3	29
Category 4	13
Category 5	9

Discussion: The pie chart and table (3) above show the responses of teachers for HPE Theme 3. The reactions of teachers vary between categories, which shows that they expressed differing views. Most categories had a higher percentage of responses indicating more support, while some categories were considerably less represented, indicating a barrier or differing opinion. This also corresponds with how teachers see Health and Physical Education as a way to help students with their psychological well-being in special education settings. These results suggest a relevance to looking at both teacher and student strengths when faced with barriers to the implementation of HPE.

Figure 4: Distribution of Responses on HPE Theme 4

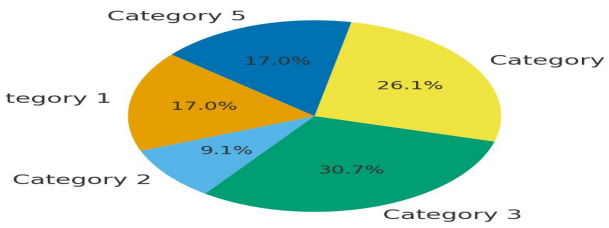

Table 4: Data Summary for Theme 4

Category	Value
Category 1	15
Category 2	8
Category 3	27
Category 4	23
Category 5	15

Discussion: The pie chart and table (4) above summarize teacher responses related to HPE Theme 4. The differences in responses across categories illustrate the diversity of perspectives from teachers. Some categories were more prevalent in responses, revealing greater agreement than others, pointing to possible issues and beliefs. The differences in the data indicate teacher's views of the role of Health and Physical Education in enhancing the psychological well-being of the children they support in these special education contexts. Considering these findings collectively, it means we need to consider both strengths and barriers removed by teachers when engaging with HPE.

Figure 5: Distribution of Responses on HPE Theme 5

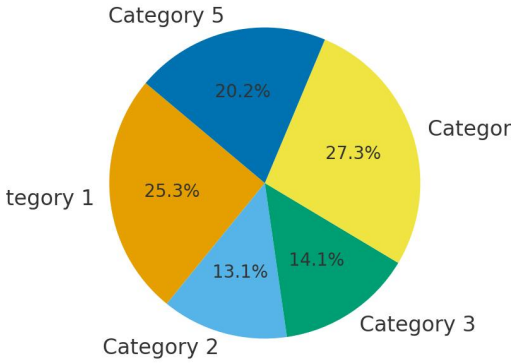

Table 5: Data Summary for Theme 5

Category	Value
Category 1	25
Category 2	13
Category 3	14
Category 4	27

Category 5	20

Discussion: The above table and pie chart (5) present teacher responses about HPE Theme 5. The distribution shows a variety of responses across some categories suggesting there are different perspectives among teachers. Some categories have higher proportions than others indicating more agreement, while other categories represented smaller proportions indicating that with particular HPE Themes, teachers feel there may be barriers or different opinions. Response to Psychological Well-Being in the context of HPE aligns with how teachers view the role of Health and Physical Education in support of psychological well-being in the context of special education. These responses illustrate the significance of teachers' strengths and barriers towards the implementation of HPE.

Figure 6: Distribution of Responses on HPE Theme 6

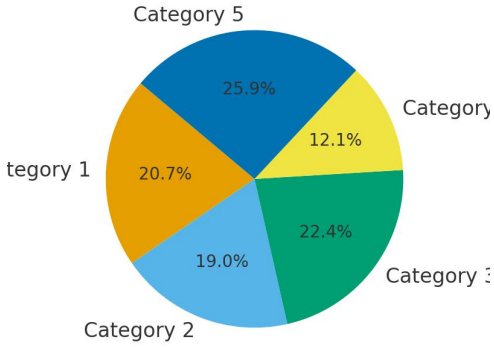

Table 6: Data Summary for Theme 6

Category	Value
Category 1	12
Category 2	11
Category 3	13
Category 4	7
Category 5	15

Discussion: The pie chart and table (6) above illustrate the professional responses about HPE Theme 6. The spread across the categories indicates a range of responses from teachers. Some of the categories are larger, reflecting strong agreement about their experiences, and other category proportions are smaller indicating challenges for some teachers, or disparity with the reported responses. This focuses on how teachers perceive Health and Physical Education as a means of supporting psychological well-being in educational settings in Special Education. The findings highlight the importance of recognizing the positives and challenges of teachers' experiences when promoting HPE.

Figure 7: Distribution of Responses on HPE Theme 7

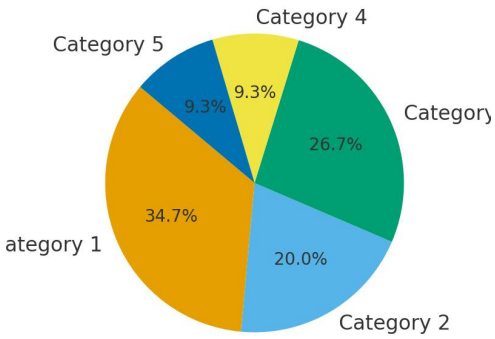

Table 7: Data Summary for Theme 7

Category	Value
Category 1	26
Category 2	15
Category 3	20
Category 4	7
Category 5	7

Discussion: The above pie chart and table (7) depict teachers' responses to the HPE Theme 7. The variation in the distribution across categories shows perspective variation based on some level of agreement in thinking among teachers. Some categories were more predominant than others, representing stronger agreement, while others were less predominately represented and suggest more difficulty or perspectives contradicted by the others. This reflects how teachers view the role of Health and Physical Education to address psychological well-being for students within the elements of special education. These ways of investigating perspectives points to a need to consider both strengths and barriers that teachers experience when acting as educators within HPE considerations.

Figure 8: Distribution of Responses on HPE Theme 8

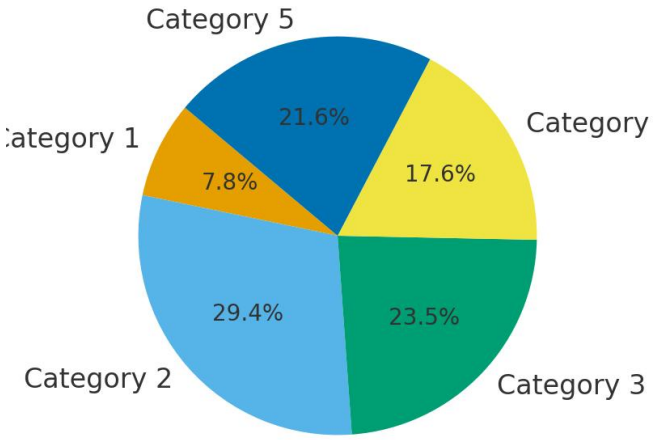

Table 8: Data Summary for Theme 8

Category	Value
Category 1	8
Category 2	30
Category 3	24
Category 4	18
Category 5	22

Discussion: The above pie chart and table (8) display the responses of teachers regarding HPE Theme 8. The distribution presents variation across themes suggesting that teachers were considering a range of opinions. A number of categories were shown to dominate (most agreement), while other areas were more of a smaller percentage suggesting challenges to implementation or shifting perspectives. This aligns to how teachers see HPE role in supporting psychological well-being for students with special educational needs. Therefore, the findings in the text highlight the importance of consideration of both the strengths and barriers facing teachers in putting HPE in action.

Figure 9: Distribution of Responses on HPE Theme 9

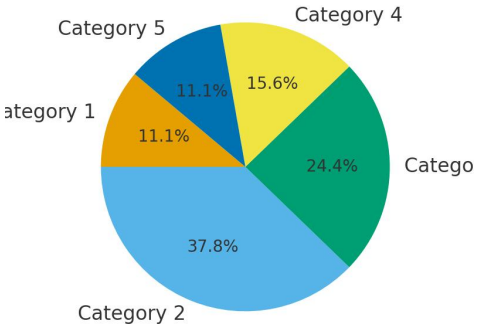

Table 9: Data Summary for Theme 9

Category	Value
Category 1	5
Category 2	17
Category 3	11
Category 4	7
Category 5	5

Discussion: The pie chart and table (9) above display teacher responses to HPE Theme 9. The distribution of responses across categories illustrates variance, and therefore suggests variability of responses from teachers. Certain categories represented most of the responses, and some agreement, whereas other categories represented less of a response, and indicated some barriers or disagreement. This shared viewpoint among teachers aligns with how teachers perceived the role of Health and Physical Education in promoting psychological well-being and health in special-education contexts. The evidence demonstrates the importance of identifying the strengths and barriers described by teachers in their application of HPE.

Figure 10: Distribution of Responses on HPE Theme 10

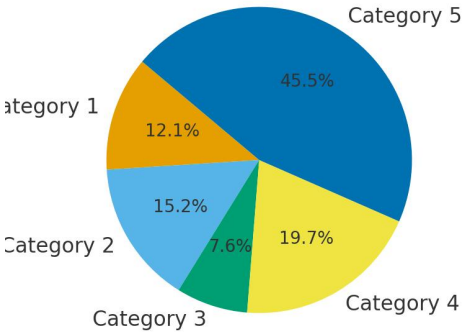

Table 10: Data Summary for Theme 10

Category	Value
Category 1	8
Category 2	10
Category 3	5
Category 4	13
Category 5	30

Discussion: The pie chart and table (10) above display teacher responses to HPE Theme 9. The distribution of responses across categories illustrates variance, and therefore suggests variability of responses from teachers. Certain categories represented most of the responses, and some agreement, whereas other categories represented less of a response, and indicated some barriers or disagreement. This shared viewpoint among teachers aligns with how teachers perceived the role of Health and Physical Education in promoting psychological well-being and health in special-education contexts. The evidence demonstrates the importance of identifying the strengths and barriers described by teachers in their application of HPE.

FINDINGS

The analysis of teacher responses provided several key insights:

1. **Benefits of Health and Physical Education (HPE) for Psychological Well-Being**
   Educationalists agree that health and physical education assists in stress release, enhanced self-esteem, and emotional management for special need students. While engaged in activity, physical education is defined to be restorative, and promoting resilience and self-esteem.
2. **Enhancing Social Interaction and Participation**
   The HPE experiences presented values for teamwork and peer interactions, and enhanced communication that informed positively instituting social participation and peer relationships.
3. **Hurdles to Being Resourced to Implement Effectively**

Despite the benefits associated to engaging in HPE, one major hurdle teachers indicated is lack of resources, past to lack of training, lack of policy, or over crowded curricula; hence, lack of training and lack of policy support were noted as barriers teachers experience in providing effective HPE as part of the special education programs.

4. **Need for Adaptation and Flexibility**
   Teachers suggested their HPE programs needed to be adaptable, in that the development of the programs needed to addressed learner's abilities and needs, for the experience to have any benefit. The teachers suggested through inclusive practice, dissemination of differentiation, and helping with modulated specific equipment would help elevate engagement of students.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the study, Health and Physical Education contributes importantly to psychological well-being in special education contexts. For the teachers, HPE is not just a physical development program. It is a psychosocial intervention that fosters emotional regulation, social inclusion, and well-being. Despite the significant benefits of HPE for special education, their potential is under-utilized, in part due to the constraints and limitations of lacking resources and systems.

The findings highlight that teachers, as key facilitators of HPE, are both advocates and implementers of its benefits. Their insights reveal that while HPE offers significant opportunities to improve the lives of students with special needs, comprehensive strategies and stronger institutional frameworks are required to realize its full impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Teachers and Schools

- Incorporate adaptive and inclusive teaching strategies within HPE programs to cater to the diverse needs of students.

- Foster collaborative activities that build teamwork, social skills, and peer support.
- Integrate HPE into individualized education plans (IEPs) to align with student-specific goals.

For Policymakers and Administrators

- Provide adequate funding and resources to strengthen HPE in special education institutions.
- Develop policies that prioritize psychological well-being as an educational outcome, ensuring HPE is recognized as essential.
- Support professional development programs to equip teachers with specialized training in adaptive physical education and inclusive practices.

For Future Research and Practice

- Conduct longitudinal studies to measure the long term impact of HPE on psychological well-being in special education.
- Explore parental involvement in supporting HPE activities at home and in school.
- Investigate the role of technology, such as adaptive equipment and virtual physical activities, in enhancing HPE experiences for students with disabilities.

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