Problems and Possibilities for Physical Education Management: A Step to Move Forward

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ABSTRACT: This qualitative research examined the challenges and opportunities of virtual physical education management due to the underlying issues that have plagued physical education teachers throughout the health crisis. The data for this study were collected using a descriptive-qualitative research approach. The researcher selected ten physical education teachers from a particular school in China. This method led to the explanation of informant experiences, which were finally translated into codes and significant themes. Results show that despite the fact that the vast majority of teachers explicitly discussed the negative aspects of their experiences during the lockdown, almost all agreed that online education provides Physical Education with exciting new potential.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Physical Education, Online Learning, New Approaches

I. INTRODUCTION

The widespread effects of the epidemic necessitated the adoption of a new method of instruction for Physical Education classes. A field of study that is largely concerned with physical, open space, and performance-based has become more complex in terms of its management and conduct. Due to the global lockdown, learners do not all have the same opportunity to engage in physical activity because of a variety of factors and constraints (Hu et al., 2021).

As a result, the question of whether or not it is possible to hold classes virtually became apparent. In Wuhan, China, web-based applications were also implemented (Xia et al., 2021). Physical education is widely regarded as an important endeavor that should be undertaken to encourage students to engage in physical activity; nevertheless, the process of how to maintain a quality implementation during virtual learning has not been resolved. (Piggin, 2021). The fact that teachers are unable to keep an eye on what their students are doing while they are using online learning platforms is a major contributing factor to why this mode of instruction is regarded as less effective for the actual teaching and learning that takes place (Ilahi et al., 2021).

Due to the underlying issues that have been plaguing Physical Education teachers throughout the health crisis, the purpose of this research was to investigate the difficulties and possibilities that come with managing physical education in a virtual setting. As such, the answer to this question may hold the key to establishing the likelihood of successfully conducting and managing the subject through the utilization of technology-based education.

II. METHOD

A descriptive-qualitative research design was applied for this study's data collection. In China, ten physical education teachers from a certain school were chosen on purpose by the researcher. The use of this strategy contributed to explaining accounts provided by the informants, which were ultimately transferred into codes and pertinent themes. As a result, significant data were gathered with the sole intention of making a contribution to the field of physical education.

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III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Significant Data Pertaining to Initial Reactions of PE Teachers

Participant	Significant Statement
Participants 1 and 7	"The pandemic was not as easy as I thought it would be. I thought it was just for 3-4 months. When I realized that it was not the case, I felt anxious. I didn't know where to start." "No one could actually tell where to begin. We were at same footing, I guess. Confused. Afraid."
Participant 2	"In my case, I was stuck in my hometown, where the internet was slow. It was one of the most difficult times of my life. I am sure everyone felt the same. I had to call my co-teachers, students, and head to let them know that I can only go online at a certain time of the day."
Participants 5 and 6	"I was at a loss for quite some time." "I was groping in the dark."
Participant 9	"I got worried that I would lose my job. I kept on asking my school for reassurances, knowing that some students had to stop schooling."

Theme 2: Some Significant Statements on Realities in Teaching Physical Education

Participant	Significant Statement
Participants 2, 3, 10	"Space was a challenge for sure. I needed to accept that. "As a PE teacher, I must be aware of my limitations and begin brainstorming solutions to this problem." "Students complained a lot about many things. They would tell me that it was impossible to perform activities in a limited space." "We were selective of the physical activities due to some challenges in physical space."
Participants 4, 5, 10	"I use technology in limited circumstances." "PE is about performance, so students need to be outdoors, performing… Virtual classes were quite a challenge. I had difficulty checking their individual tasks." "I don't have extensive experience with the use of technology. Yes, I use computers for tying up my lessons, preparing my grades, and other tasks. But, when it comes to conducting PE class. It focuses more on actual physical tasks and activities.
Participants 1, 6, 7	"Teachers in other disciplines were doing okay. I felt lost for a moment because of major constraints in my preparation. But, I had to face the reality and cope with what I was lacking of, training and ICT skills. " "We had a request for ICT-skills training for PE. I think that other teachers teaching courses like Science and History were doing coping fast. PE was different. So, I had to come up with our own methods to assess the students."

Table 3. Some Significant Statements Prospects and Possibilities of Online Physical Education

Participant	Significant Statement
Participant 1	"At that time, I had to live through this. I eventually learned to use all kinds of ways to exchange information with others, such as: WeChat, Weibo, Tencent QQ and a few more. Chat Rooms and virtual rooms were used. I also use this platform to send videos, announcements, and assignments. All students had to be added here. But, of course, I made some rules to follow, like don't use bad language, answer quickly, set official times to chat and message any classmate, and so on. From here, I liked the new system better and was happier with it. The pandemic taught me to be creative and know how to use technology well.
Participants 2 and 3	"I always asked students to open their cameras. That was my first rule. I record all my classes and check on each student after class. With this method, I know who is not performing during my class. I ask them record themselves and send me short videos of their performances" "I have to change lessons, strategies, and lessons that would fit to online learning. No outdoor or sports activities, just know… viewing of videos and simple demonstrations."
Participant 4	"Not only the professors but also the students need to adjust in this kind of set-up. Making or doing some strategies for teaching and making the lessons interesting… I made a video on my own demonstrating the activities just to make sure the student will understand the lessons and what they need to do and practice also, using digital references and others. But above all, I need to make sure my students are emotionally and physically healthy. I know they were also struggling."
Participant 5	"It is definitely possible to conduct PE classes online. Our school management tried their best to support us. We acquired a powerful infrastructure to support our technology needs. E-learning and Massive Open Online courses were a great solution to collaborate with our co-teachers and students."
Participant 10	"At my age, I needed to know what all the young teachers were doing. I learned how to use both social media and the online platform at my school. I can't face my students if I haven't done enough work. I do some exercises with them. So, I taught myself how to use a video camera. I would make sure it was set up right and that they could see me. Now I've learned that it's possible and easier. Even if we meet in person, we can still do PE online."

IV. DISCUSSION

There are three (3) main ideas that emerged from this research. These are: 1.) Theme 1: Initial Reactions; 2.) Theme 2: Realities in Teaching Physical Education, and 3.) Prospects and Possibilities of Online Physical Education. Each theme was thoroughly discussed.

The pandemic has compelled physical education (PE) instructors to adopt new instructional methods and formats. According to a study conducted by UNESCO in 2021, many physical education teachers were required to migrate to virtual teaching and learning, posing a substantial barrier for those who were unfamiliar with this format. Due to technological difficulties and a dearth of resources, teachers also reported difficulty maintaining student involvement during distance learning. Henrique et al. (2021) found that learners in remote learning lacked social interaction and physical activity. Without classes, learners have difficulty remaining active.

The participants made clear recollections of their initial experiences during the onset of the pandemic. Their predicament was similar to most teachers' experiences all over the world. Due to the nature of physical education, many teachers were anxious and clueless about the implementation of the virtual learning modality. Some were also concerned about losing their jobs due to the increasing number of students dropping out of school.

Eventually, processes took shape when teachers formulated their own methods and strategies. As mentioned by one participant in Table 2, *"I had to live through this. I eventually learned to use all kinds of ways to exchange information."* One revealed that the opening of cameras is important when conducting PE classes. It was also important to set a schedule for messaging and communication with teachers and classmates for them to follow. These were one of the rules they had to set in their classes.

Based on the findings, the main obstacles were a shortage of suitable space and infrastructure, as well as inadequate training for teachers on information and communication technology. Zhu and Wang's (2020) research highlighting issues with inadequate space to engage in physical activity is consistent with these findings. However, they were compelled to start the process of transitioning to the new and prescribed system of delivery. Initially, WeChat, Weibo, Tencent QQ, and other programs were heavily utilized for communication. Others adapted by learning to acclimate, while some remained vehemently opposed to these changes.

The pandemic has made the profession of physical education particularly challenging for both instructors and students. As a result, teachers have been required to adopt new teaching strategies and modify their curricula, while students have had fewer opportunities for social interaction and physical activity. To properly address these issues, a multifaceted approach was required. This strategy

involved investing in technology and equipment, aiding educators in adapting to new forms, and emphasizing the health and well-being of children throughout physical education.

MOOCs, e-learning, and several other applications and tools were used by educators as a means of getting past some of the challenges they faced. In fact, there were times when they were forced to rely on themselves to prepare videos for demonstrations since they did not have enough resources to facilitate the delivery of their courses. According to Huaijin et al. (2018), teachers are expected to be creative in online and offline learning activities for students and boost the innovative qualities of the PE curriculum in order to pique the interest of sports students in studying.

More senior teachers were proactive learners in the use of technology. As revealed in their interviews, they were able to unlock new and relevant skills for them to keep up with the situation. In fact, one could vouch for the importance of online technology even after the pandemic. In addition, several teachers have to alter their material to accommodate physical separation guidelines and restricted equipment and facilities. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2021), several schools had to suspend team sports and other high-contact activities, which affected class exercises and drills. Hence, to properly address these issues by setting-up new guidelines in their respective schools.

V. CONCLUSION

Despite the vast majority of teachers openly discussing the negative aspects of their experiences during the lockdown, they were of the same opinion that online education presented exciting new opportunities for Physical Education. They were able to create novel solutions to their ongoing issues in spite of the specific requirements of the subject, which did not hinder their ability to do so. In fact, a significant number of them were able to discover new skills related to the application of numerous technological tools. Physical education instructors and students have struggled with the pandemic. Teachers have had to change their methods and curricula, and students have had fewer chances to socialize and exercise. These concerns need a diversified approach. New policies and guidelines must include investing in technology and equipment, helping educators adapt, and emphasizing learners' health and well-being in physical education.

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