

# Physical Education Activities and Character Development of Junior High School Students

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## **Abstract**

This study determined how Physical Education activities contribute to the character development of junior high school students in the Tinambac District, Division of Camarines Sur. It assessed the level of Physical Education activities including fitness activities, physical fitness tests, team sports, indoor recreational activities, and regional and national dances with Asian influence and their relationship to character traits such as respect, responsibility, resilience, honesty, and citizenship. Employing a descriptive correlational research design, data were gathered from 302 junior high school students proportionally selected from sixteen secondary schools using a researcher developed questionnaire and observation checklist. Findings revealed that Physical Education activities were highly to very highly observed across schools and that students demonstrated very high levels of character development in respect, responsibility, and honesty, while resilience and citizenship were moderately high. Results further indicated a significant relationship between all Physical Education activities and character development; however, the extent of influence of Physical Education activities on character traits was generally weak to very weak, suggesting that character development occurs more incidentally than intentionally. The study concludes that while Physical Education provides a valuable context for character formation, its impact can be strengthened through deliberate instructional strategies, enhanced teacher training, and supportive policy measures. The findings served as the basis for formulating evidence-based policy recommendations using a Modified ADDIE framework to promote more intentional integration of character development in Physical Education.

## **1. Introduction**

Physical Education (PE) has long been recognized as an essential component of holistic student development, evolving from early forms of structured physical training in ancient civilizations to the formalized school-based programs seen today. In contemporary educational research, key concepts such as motor skill development, physical literacy, fitness behavior, and psychosocial engagement provide a foundation for understanding how students participate in physical education activities. This study situates itself within this evolving context, exploring how PE activities shape students' physical, cognitive, and social outcomes in the current educational environment.

Character development has long been regarded as a fundamental goal of education, stemming from ancient philosophies that viewed moral formation as essential to cultivating responsible and virtuous citizens. In contemporary educational discourse, character development is understood through key concepts such as moral reasoning, values formation, socio-emotional learning, and positive behavior cultivation elements viewed as critical during adolescence, a period marked by rapid cognitive, emotional,

and social change. Within this context, the character development of junior high school students remains a vital area of study, as schools continue to play a central role in nurturing ethical decision-making, resilience, empathy, and responsible citizenship during these formative years.

Around the world, schools continue to struggle with declining student participation in Physical Education (PE) activities due to limited resources, overcrowded curricula, and unequal access to safe recreational spaces. These challenges are compounded by increasing rates of sedentary lifestyles and digital dependency, which hinder the development of essential physical skills and healthy habits among adolescents. At the same time, global concerns about bullying, social disengagement, and weakened value formation highlight gaps in the character development of junior high school students. Educators worldwide face the pressing need to redesign school programs that effectively integrate meaningful physical activities with intentional character-building experiences. Physical Education provides a highly favorable context for developing cooperation, respect, coeducation, and entrepreneurship, key aspects related to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, Target 7. In the Philippines, many junior high schools face persistent challenges in implementing effective Physical Education (PE) activities due to limited sports facilities, inadequate equipment, and overcrowded classes, especially in public schools. These constraints often lead to reduced student engagement in physical activities, contributing to concerns about rising inactivity and health risks among Filipino adolescents. At the same time, issues such as bullying, lack of discipline, and fragmented values education highlight gaps in character development programs within the Philippine basic education system. Consequently, schools and educators are increasingly called to strengthen PE and character formation initiatives to better support the holistic growth of junior high school learners. In this light, the Philippine Sports Commission's legal mandate (2021) and the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, particularly Articles 2 and 3. Systematic reviews confirmed that Physical Education (PE) significantly improved health-related fitness outcomes and fundamental motor skills among youth (García-Hermoso et al., 2020; D'Anna, Forte, & Gomez Paloma, 2019). Similarly, studies highlighted the importance of PE in promoting school-time physical activity; however, resource limitations and contextual barriers hindered its effectiveness (Botagariyeva et al., 2016; Zimmo et al., 2017). Teachers emphasized that PE provided opportunities to instill values such as teamwork, discipline, and respect, aligning with broader goals of character education (Tutkun et al., 2017; Little & Sweller, 2015; Locke, 2019). Innovative approaches, such as physically active lessons, were shown to enhance both academic performance and behavioral outcomes, bridging the gap between physical activity and cognitive development (Norris et al., 2015; Pulido Gil et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2023). These findings underscored the multidimensional benefits of PE when implemented effectively. Research also showed that PE and character education were closely linked, with teacher expectations, self-efficacy, and reward systems shaping student motivation and behavior (Aydın & Ok, 2022; Ribble, 2020; Chen, 2020). Integrating character values into PE fostered discipline, teamwork, and resilience, while reflective and student-centered approaches enhanced autonomy and engagement (Chang, 2019; Ho, 2023; Thorburn, 2015). Models such as mini-volleyball, motion cards, and traditional games helped instill values like respect and peace (Sujarwo et al., 2021; Wijaya et al., 2020; Kogoya et al., 2023), and recent studies affirmed PE's role in strengthening community and moral development (Jahrir et al., 2024; Gandasari, 2023; Brunson, 2023; Yasmin Siti et al., 2024). PE served as both a platform for physical growth and a powerful tool for embedding character education in schools (Muhtar et al., 2020; Suherman, 2018; Nash, 2019). Notably, Physical Education had

been identified as “probably the most significant context for physical activity concerning the cultivation of moral character,” highlighting the important role that physical educators played in shaping not just athletes but well-rounded individuals (Paciorek, 2017). Research showed that student satisfaction with PE was influenced by instructional models, motivational profiles, and perceptions of competitiveness (Baena-Extremera & Granero-Gallegos, 2015; Granero-Gallegos et al., 2020; Bernstein et al., 2015; Rodríguez-Negro & Yanci, 2015). Moreover, PE contributed substantially to overall physical activity levels among adolescents, reinforcing its role in public health promotion (Meyer et al., 2015; Hills et al., 2015). Promoting desirable moral traits offered numerous benefits for students, such as lower stress levels, increased resilience and self-awareness, reduced alcohol- and drug-related problems, and improved academic achievement (Roger, 2020). At its core, promoting good character was fundamentally the right thing to do. In the Tinambac District, Division of Camarines Sur, secondary schools operated with limited physical resources, large class sizes, and varied implementation of Physical Education programs. Many public secondary schools lacked adequate sports facilities, functional equipment, and covered activity spaces, especially smaller schools. As a result, Physical Education classes were often shortened, modified, or conducted with minimal instructional depth, focusing primarily on basic physical participation rather than intentional character formation. Teachers, while committed to student development, frequently faced challenges in balancing curriculum demands with value-based instruction due to time constraints and the absence of structured frameworks that explicitly integrated character development into PE lessons. Within this context, observable concerns such as declining student motivation, inconsistent discipline, limited teamwork skills, and emerging issues related to respect, responsibility, and resilience became evident among junior high school learners. Moreover, students came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, many of whom experienced limited parental supervision and minimal exposure to organized sports or character-building activities outside school. Without deliberate strategies that embedded character education into Physical Education activities, the potential of PE as a holistic developmental tool remained underutilized. Furthermore, the findings of this study were significant as they benefited multiple stakeholders in education. For students, participation in Physical Education activities fostered teamwork, leadership, resilience, discipline, and goal-setting, all of which contributed to character development. Teachers gained valuable insights into how physical activity supported holistic growth, enabling them to tailor strategies that nurtured essential life skills. School heads used the results to advocate for stronger PE programs that promoted both health and values, while parents were encouraged to support their children’s involvement in PE for balanced academic and personal growth. For DepEd Camarines Sur officials, the study provided evidence to inform curriculum design and resource allocation, emphasizing the integration of character education into PE. Policymakers also drew on these findings to justify increased investment in PE programs that prioritized mental, emotional, and social well-being alongside academics. Finally, the study served as a useful reference for other researchers, offering a foundation for further exploration into the role of Physical Education in character development. The primary intention of this study was to critically examine the extent to which Physical Education activities contributed to the character development of junior high school students, particularly within school contexts marked by limited resources, overcrowded classes, and inconsistent application of values-based instruction. By exploring the intersection between physical fitness and moral formation, the study contended that Physical Education, when deliberately and effectively implemented, had the capacity to function as a dual-purpose educational platform that promoted both physical well-being and the internalization of essential life values. The findings were expected to demonstrate that character traits such as respect, responsibility,

resilience, honesty, and citizenship were not automatically developed through participation alone but required intentional pedagogical strategies and institutional support. Consequently, the study underscored the need for strengthened support systems, enhanced teacher training, and evidence-based policy adjustments to enable schools to maximize the role of Physical Education in shaping well-rounded, morally grounded, and socially responsible adolescents.

### **Research Objectives**

This study determined the influence of physical Education activities on the character development of Junior High School students, Tinambac District, Division of Camarines Sur. Specifically, it attained the following objectives: 1. To assess the Physical Education activities that incorporate character development in terms of fitness activities, physical fitness tests, team sports, indoor recreational activities, and regional and national dances with Asian influence. 2. To determine the level of character development of students in Physical Education in terms of respect, responsibility, resilience, honesty, and citizenship. 3. To evaluate the significant relationship between Physical Education activities and the character development of students. 4. To determine the extent of the influence of Physical Education activities on the character development of students. 5. To develop policy recommendations that promote the effective incorporation of character development in Physical Education activities.

### **Scope and Delimitation**

This study determined the influence of physical Education activities on the character development of Junior High School Students and served as basis in crafting policy recommendations in Tinambac District, Division of Camarines, school year 2025-2026. This study determined the Physical Education activities that incorporated character development. It also investigated the level of character development of students in Physical Education. Furthermore, it examined the relationship between Physical Education activities and character development, as well as the influence of these activities on the character development of students. Lastly, the study proposed policy recommendations that may promote the effective incorporation of character development in Physical Education activities. The respondents of this study were 302 junior high school students from 16 secondary schools in the Tinambac District. The number of participants from each school was calculated proportionally based on the total student population. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, and purposive sampling was used to identify the specific participants of the investigation. This study did not explore other factors such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, or prior educational experiences of the respondents. It also excluded certain Physical Education activities, such as individual sports, as well as school heads and private high schools in the Tinambac District.

### **Results and discussion**

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the data gathered concerning the specific questions of the study. Data and information together with the analyses, discussion, and interpretation of the results. Also, the results were presented in tables whenever possible to comprehend the interpretation, analysis, and discussion.

### Respondents of the Study

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents across the sixteen participating schools. Among these, School G had the highest number of respondents with 105 (35%), followed by School O with 36 respondents (12%), and School B with 21 respondents (7%). Other schools contributed moderate proportions, including School C with 22 respondents (7%), School E with 17 (6%), and Schools F and H with 15 respondents each (5%). The remaining schools had smaller representations: School J (12 or 4%), School L (11 or 4%), School N (11 or 4%), School P (13 or 4%), School D (6 or 2%), School I (5 or 2%), School A (7 or 2%), and Schools K and M with 3 respondents each (1%). In total, 302 respondents were drawn from a population of 1,233 students, representing 100% of the sample. This distribution indicates that larger schools contributed more respondents due to their higher enrollment, while smaller schools were proportionally represented, ensuring balance and inclusivity across the district.

**Table 1**

*Respondents of the Study*

School	N	n	%
A	30	7	2
B	87	21	7
C	90	22	7
D	25	6	2
E	71	17	6
F	60	15	5
G	430	105	35
H	61	15	5
I	20	5	2
J	50	12	4
K	11	3	1
L	43	11	4
M	10	3	1
N	46	11	4
O	145	36	12
P	54	13	4
Total	1233	302	100

To achieve this representation, the study employed total enumeration to include all eligible respondents within the identified population, thereby minimizing sampling bias and ensuring comprehensive coverage. In addition, purposive sampling was used to select participants who met specific criteria, particularly junior high school students who were actively enrolled and participating in Physical Education classes during the conduct of the study. This approach ensured that all respondents had direct and relevant exposure to the PE activities being evaluated, allowing them to provide accurate and meaningful responses. The use of purposive sampling is well-supported in educational research, as it enables the selection of information-rich participants who can best address the objectives of the study. Previous studies have demonstrated that purposive sampling is effective in obtaining valid and context-specific insights,

particularly when participants are chosen based on their experience and relevance to the research problem. Overall, the combination of total enumeration and purposive sampling strengthened the methodological rigor of the study by ensuring both comprehensive representation and the inclusion of participants with relevant experiences, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

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