



Evaluating Exercise as Punishment: Insights from the Delphi Method on Philippine School Practices

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Abstract

The study aimed to identify consensus among PE experts on using exercise as punishment (EAP) in Philippine schools. The study adopted a two-round Delphi method. In the first round, a survey with open-ended questions prompted experts to identify as many reasons as possible for the use of EAP in schools. This format gave the experts a more significant role in responding, as they could identify crucial themes related to EAP usage and then refine them into meaningful categories. The second round of the survey asked the experts to rank these identified factors based on their perceived importance. Based on the experts' agreement, "EAP as a disciplinary tool" was ranked as the most significant dimension in the use of EAP in schools. Further factors impacting its use, including social pressure, physical health benefits, its connection to establishing authority, academic performance, athletic performance, and a lack of understanding about alternative disciplinary measures, were also identified. Despite its documented harms, the use of EAP persists in Philippine schools. This study reveals a complex web of drivers, including a persistent belief in EAP's disciplinary effectiveness, external pressures for "tough" approaches, and a lack of awareness of positive alternatives. These factors create a cycle of conformity in which student well-being could suffer. To break this cycle, schools must prioritize fostering positive teacher-student relationships, equipping teachers, leaders, and staff with effective disciplinary strategies, and challenging misguided narratives around EAP's supposed merits.

Keywords: exercise as punishment; physical education; schools; positive work culture; education policy

Introduction

Physical exercise is crucial for maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Mann et al., 2014; Zhu et al., 2022). It aids weight management, improves cardiovascular health, and enhances mood, sleep, and cognition (Dolezal et al., 2017; Edwards & Loprinzi, 2018; Xu et al., 2023). Diverse activities can contribute to physical fitness and overall well-being (Tanucan et al., 2022; Weyh et al., 2020), with outdoor

exercise offering additional benefits (Briant et al., 2022; Kamp et al., 2014). However, the misuse of exercise as punishment remains a concern. Exercise as punishment (EAP) refers to the practice of making someone engage in physical activity as a form of discipline or penalty for misbehavior. The utilization of EAP remains a contentious practice across various settings, particularly within educational institutions (Burak et al., 2013; Kerr et al., 2020; Rosenthal et al., 2010). Proponents of EAP advocate for

its ability to foster self-control and discipline, positing that performing physical activities under punitive conditions promotes rule adherence and personal responsibility (Battaglia & Kerr, 2022; Kerr et al., 2020). Additionally, some believe that EAP offers health benefits due to the established positive impact of exercise on well-being and various health parameters (Carolina Performance, 2015). However, the ethical and practical drawbacks of EAP necessitate its critical examination.

Opponents raise concerns about the potential for developing negative associations with physical activity, leading to a decreased likelihood of engaging in exercise voluntarily (Burak et al., 2013; Kerr et al., 2020; Rosenthal et al., 2010). Furthermore, research suggests that EAP can have detrimental consequences for individuals subjected to it, including athletes, who may experience fatigue, injuries, strained coach-athlete relationships, and negative self-perception (Battaglia et al., 2018; Kerr et al., 2016). The potential harms of EAP are severe and can be classified as forms of psychological and non-contact physical abuse, as established by previous studies (Fortier et al., 2020; Stirling, 2009).

Using EAP is a common practice in sports and physical education (PE). It seems that PE and sports culture are deeply rooted in the practice of forcing young people to exercise as a kind of punishment (Richardson et al., 2012). Exercise is a common tool used by trainers and coaches to change performance-detrimental behaviors (Kerr et al., 2020). Running, push-ups, and even being suspended from practice are examples of how this can appear (Battaglia et al., 2017; Burak et al., 2013; Richardson et al., 2012). Nevertheless, research has indicated that exercising as punishment or behavior modification can result in attitudes against exercise that last well into adulthood (Burak et al., 2013; Richardson et al., 2012). According to research by Salim and Winter (2022), gymnasts who were subjected to different types of abuse, such as EAP, had psychological effects that persisted for up to 20 years after they retired. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has deemed EAP a form of corporal punishment and unsuitable in 29 states in the US (Johnson, 2022; SHAPE America, 2009). EAP use, according to NASPE, can have a detrimental psychological and physical impact on students. These consequences may include heightened tension and anxiety, lowered self-worth, a higher chance of injury, and a decreased desire to work out.

According to NASPE, employing EAP gives students an incorrect impression (Johnson, 2022; SHAPE America, 2009). To encourage positive attitudes toward physical activity, it suggests that exercise should be viewed as a pleasurable and positive activity rather than a punishment. Even with the well-established negative consequences of EAP, it is significant that this strategy is still widely used in many nations, including the Philippines.

In the Philippines, EAP has recently come under fire, causing public indignation and apprehension about its harmful effects. In order to guarantee safe and efficient disciplinary procedures, this trend demands immediate attention and proactive steps. A man who disobeyed quarantine regulations was made to perform 300 squats as punishment by police in a widely reported incident, which ultimately resulted in his death (Sullivan, 2021). An inquiry into government officials' disproportionate use of EAP as a disciplinary tool was prompted by this tragic incident. In addition to government representatives, reports have surfaced of teachers utilizing EAP in classrooms and forcing misbehaving students to kneel for protracted periods (Manto, 2010; Mateo, 2016; The Filipino Times, 2019). This raises concerns about abuse of power by teachers, creating a negative learning environment and potentially hindering students' overall physical and mental well-being. When teachers use physical punishment, it can create a climate of fear and intimidation in the classroom, making it challenging to encourage students to participate in exercise and other physical activities. It can also lead to students developing negative attitudes about school and authority figures.

Ironically, EAP emerges amidst efforts to combat physical inactivity in the Philippines, a significant public health concern with many young Filipinos not meeting recommended activity levels (Guthold et al., 2020; Marques et al., 2020). The government has implemented initiatives promoting physical activity through sports, PE, and healthy lifestyle campaigns (Department of Education, 2019; Department of Health, 2011; Official Gazette, 1987; 1995). However, the use of EAP contradicts these efforts by potentially fostering negative associations with exercise and discouraging voluntary participation in physical activities. These concerns highlight the need to shift away from EAP and emphasize positive, evidence-based disciplinary practices. This requires collaboration between government agencies, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to develop and implement effective alternative strategies that focus on education, understanding, and positive behavior reinforcement.

Several factors likely contribute to the prevalence of physical inactivity in the Philippines, and the utilization of EAP in schools may be one such factor, reflecting a deeper societal issue, particularly the normalization and acceptance of punitive measures. Research suggests that attitudes and social pressures play a significant role in individuals' engagement with EAP. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) posits that these constructs, alongside subjective norms, significantly influence behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Studies applying TRA to PE majors indicate that attitudes and subjective norms alone accounted for 70% of the variance in their EAP implementation intentions (Burak et al., 2014). Similarly, a study by Kerr et al. (2020) explored sports coaches'

views on EAP, finding that they perceived it as a tool to motivate student performance and foster team cohesion. This inclination towards discipline through discomfort reflects broader cultural attitudes towards authority, obedience, and the role of punishment in shaping behavior. This study also reveals that EAP can function as a display of authority, echoing findings by Battaglia et al. (2018) and Kerr et al. (2020), who highlight its use by coaches and teachers to establish control. Punishment, defined as the imposition of negative consequences by an authority figure in response to perceived wrongdoing (Geeraets, 2018), is inherently linked to asserting dominance. Its goal is to deter repetition of the targeted behavior. Therefore, when teachers employ EAP, they implicitly communicate their power to compel students to comply with their directives.

Furthermore, the persistence of EAP in the Philippines despite the discouragement of punitive practices in schools (Andrade, 2016) can be attributed to a complex interplay of cultural and historical factors. A traditional emphasis on discipline and obedience, deeply ingrained in Filipino society, may lead some educators to view EAP as a way to instill respect for authority and correct perceived misbehavior. This practice may be further amplified by the Philippines' emphasis on machismo, a cultural value advocating for strength, toughness, and dominance (Navera, 2021). The cultural value placed on hard work and physical exertion may also contribute to the acceptance of EAP, as it is seen as a means to build character and resilience through physical challenges. Additionally, the lasting influence of colonial education systems that emphasized rote learning and strict discipline (DeStephano, 2011) can perpetuate the use of EAP in schools. This is coupled with a lack of understanding and implementation of positive reinforcement-based approaches to discipline (Banzon-Librojo et al., 2017), which can inadvertently strengthen the notion that exercise is a suitable punishment for children and adolescents, enforcing conformity to rules and expectations set by authority figures, rather than promoting physical activity as a positive and healthy habit. Such practices could perpetuate a negative association with exercise, potentially contributing to the high levels of physical inactivity observed in the Philippines.

While these existing studies provide valuable insights from the perspectives of coaches and students, further research is necessary to understand EAP utilization in schools fully. Much of the existing research focuses primarily on attitudes and subjective norms within the TRA framework. More comprehensive investigations are needed to explore the influence of additional factors, such as the cultural and historical context discussed above. By expanding the scope of research beyond the individual level to include the perspectives of experts who have experience with the use of EAP in schools, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex issue of EAP and inform the development of effective interventions and policy changes to promote positive disciplinary practices and encourage a healthy relationship with physical activity among Filipino students. The study aimed to identify consensus among PE experts on using EAP in Philippine schools.

Methods

Participants

Thirty-two PE experts from various institutions participated in this study (See Table 1). A mixed-method purposive sampling approach was used to recruit a diverse and knowledgeable group of PE experts. Criterion-based sampling was used to identify PE experts who met the following criteria: (1) have a master's degree in PE, (2) at least ten years of teaching experience in PE, (3) at least five years of experience leading a PE department, and (4) awareness of the issue of using EAP in schools. The establishment of criteria is essential in establishing an acceptable degree of trustworthiness. Snowball sampling was used to identify additional experts known to the initial group of experts. Opportunity sampling was used to recruit available and willing experts to participate in the study. Experts were recruited via personal contacts, central mailboxes, and phone lines. While there is no single set of criteria for determining who qualifies as an expert (Hasson et al., 2008; McKenna, 1994; Hsu & Sandford, 2007), participants' expertise and experience are critical to the reliability of Delphi results (Hasson & Keeney, 2011; Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Table 1. PE experts' profiles

No.	Experience (in years)	Position	Background of Institution
E1	13	Head of Program	Institution A is a public research university located in Cebu, Philippines
E2	20	University Director	
E3	15	Associate Professor	
E4	15	Associate Professor	
E5	10	Assistant Professor	
E6	10	Assistant Professor	
E7	20	Sports Director	

No.	Experience (in years)	Position	Background of Institution
E8	14	Head of Program	Institution B is a public research university located in Cebu, Philippines.
E9	10	Sports Director	
E10	16	Associate Professor	
E11	12	Associate Professor	
E12	18	Associate Professor	
E13	16	Associate Professor	Institution C is a private university located in Paranaque, Philippines
E14	20	Head of Program	
E15	10	Senior Lecturer	
E16	10	Senior Lecturer	Institution D is a public research university located in Davao, Philippines
E17	17	Head of Program	
E18	14	Associate Professor	
E19	12	Associate Professor	Institution E is a private university located in Manila, Philippines
E20	17	Head of Program	
E21	19	Sports Director	
E22	12	Associate Professor	
E23	16	Associate Professor	Institution F is a private university located in Pampanga, Philippines
E24	21	Professor	
E25	15	Head of Program	
E26	15	Associate Professor	Institution G is a public school located in Cebu, Philippines
E27	21	Master Teacher	
E28	17	Senior Teacher	
E29	19	Department Head	Institution H is a public school located in Iloilo, Philippines
E30	22	Master Teacher	
E31	15	Senior Teacher	
E32	18	Senior Teacher	

The participants, all with a minimum of 10 years of experience in the field, constituted a diverse group representing various sectors of the Philippine education landscape. Sixteen experts were affiliated with public research universities, ten with private universities, and six were professional teachers from public schools nationwide. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of the participant group, we collected additional socio-demographic information, including gender (18 males, 14 females), age (ranging from 35 to 62 years old with a mean age of 47), size of the educational institution (ranging from small institutions with less than 5000 students to large universities with over 20,000 students), and location (5 from urban areas, 3 from rural areas). This data not only contextualizes the expertise and experience of the participants but also provides insights into potential variations in perspectives based on individual characteristics and professional contexts.

Research Design

The factors influencing the use of EAP in schools were determined using a two-round Delphi technique. Thompson (1990) defines the Delphi method as obtaining

and integrating expert opinions. It is a structured, iterative process for obtaining expert consensus on a particular topic (Subramaniam et al., 2024). It involves posing questions to a panel of experts, who are then asked to rank their responses anonymously (Tee et al., 2022). The results of each round of questioning are then compiled and shared with the panel, who are then asked to revise their responses in light of the group's feedback. This process continues until the panel reaches a consensus on the topic (Tan et al., 2024). The Delphi method can also make predictions (Miller, 1995).

Data Collection

This Delphi study employed a two-round protocol. In the first round, experts participated in a survey containing open-ended questions listing reasons for EAP usage in schools. This format allowed the experts to actively contribute by identifying key factors and grouping them into relevant dimensions. Similar responses were combined to prevent duplication, and a synthesized list informed the second round. The experts were asked to rank each factor in order of significance in the second round.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to examine the responses from the initial round of this investigation. Creating conceptual labels for the data was necessary to compile and organize the participants' suggestions. In the second round of the Delphi process, each factor's mean and group rank were determined.

To assess expert consensus on proposed factors, we computed Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) after the second round of the Delphi method (Tang et al., 2024). This measure determines how uniformly experts rank the importance of factors. We then evaluated the statistical significance of W by comparing its associated p-value and Chi-square test statistics against the critical value. A significant W indicates consistent rankings among experts. Generally, a high W value (close to 1) and a low p-value (below 0.05) suggest strong agreement. Conversely, a low W accompanied by a high p-value (above 0.05) implies

inconsistent expert rankings, necessitating a third Delphi round (Siegel, 1957).

Results

The Delphi method's first round

The Delphi method produced 29 unique themes in its first round. Table 2 presents the seven dimensions that resulted from analysis, synthesis, and grouping of these themes. Five themes are contained in each of the three dimensions including the rest: „EAP as a tool for discipline and behavior management”, „Social Pressure of Using EAP”, and „Lack of Knowledge about Disciplinary Measures”. There are four themes in the „EAP for Athletic Performance” and „EAP as a Display of Authority” dimensions, respectively. The three themes that make up „EAP for Academic Performance” and „EAP for Physical Health” are each separate.

Table 2. Round one Delphi results

Dimensions	Themes
EAP as a tool for discipline and behavior management	EAP can help establish clear expectations in class EAP is an effective method of discipline EAP can help reduce destructive behavior EAP can promote accountability of actions EAP can demonstrate a cause and effect situation
EAP for Physical Health	EAP can improve physical health EAP can help with weight loss or maintenance EAP as an opportunity to exercise
EAP for Academic Performance	EAP can improve class performance EAP can force students to do better in class EAP can challenge students to study lessons diligently
Social Pressure of using EAP	Colleagues supporting or practicing the use of EAP. Social media showing the practice of EAP Social pressure in using EAP for fitness and discipline Leaders find EAP acceptable Parents understand the use of EAP
Lack of Knowledge about Disciplinary Measures	Unfamiliar with various disciplinary measures available Unsure of the ways to implement various disciplinary measures to different types of students Unawareness of the impact of EAP Unawareness that EAP is a form of corporal punishment Outdated practice in correcting misbehaviors
EAP as a Display of Authority	The culture of shaming and punishing for misbehavior Public shaming to discourage others from engaging in unacceptable behavior or performance Display of authority Maintenance of social order
EAP for Athletic Performance	EAP can encourage athletes to stay focused on their training EAP can challenge athletes to push their performance limits EAP can motivate students not to decrease their performance level EAP can instill a winning mindset

The Delphi method's second round

The second round of the Delphi method started in May 2023. PE experts' initial responses were combined and arranged into seven dimensions, shown in Table 3. The following request was sent to the PE experts after they were contacted: „Kindly rank the dimensions that have been identified about the utilization of exercise as a disciplinary measure in school”. The PE experts were appropriately reminded that their answers represented their professional opinions. It was also explained to the participants that ranking the dimensions from one, which denotes the highest level of significance, to seven, which denotes the lowest level of significance, does not necessarily result in an accurate or definitive response. Before the second round of dimension ranking, the categorization of themes into dimensions was distributed to all PE experts to ensure the proper evaluation of their initial contributions. The PE experts were directed to use each

number only once for each factor, to avoid ranking the same factors twice, as this could potentially interfere with the statistical analysis. The authors asked 32 PE experts to provide their rankings on the seven dimensions for the second round of the Delphi process (see Table 3).

The mean ranking of the seven dimensions ranges from 1.06 to 6.25, as shown in Table 3. EAP as a tool for behavior management and discipline (1.06), Social Pressure of Using EAP (2.34), EAP for Physical Health (2.59), EAP as a Display of Authority (4.97), EAP for Academic Performance (5.22), EAP for Athletic Performance (5.56), and Lack of Knowledge about Disciplinary Measures (6.25) are the dimensions that are ranked in order of importance. The statistical analysis results show that the ranking of the participating PE experts during the second round was highly consistent, as evidenced by Kendall's W coefficient of 0.83 and the associated p-value of 0.000. As a result, it is decided that the Delphi method's third round is not required.

Table 3. Results from Delphi's second round

PE Experts	Dimensions						
	EAP as a tool for discipline and behavior management	EAP for Physical Health	EAP for Academic Performance	Social Pressure of Using EAP	Lack of Knowledge about Disciplinary Measures	EAP as a Display of Authority	EAP for Athletic Performance
E1	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E2	1	3	4	2	7	6	5
E3	1	3	4	2	7	6	5
E4	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E5	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E6	1	3	4	2	7	6	5
E7	1	3	4	2	7	6	5
E8	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E9	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E10	1	3	4	2	6	5	7
E11	1	3	4	2	6	5	7
E12	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E13	1	3	4	2	7	6	5
E14	1	3	4	2	7	6	5
E15	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E16	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E17	1	3	4	2	6	5	7
E18	1	3	4	2	6	5	7
E19	1	3	4	2	6	5	7
E20	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E21	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E22	1	3	4	2	6	5	7
E23	1	3	4	2	6	5	7

PE Experts	Dimensions						
	EAP as a tool for discipline and behavior management	EAP for Physical Health	EAP for Academic Performance	Social Pressure of Using EAP	Lack of Knowledge about Disciplinary Measures	EAP as a Display of Authority	EAP for Athletic Performance
E24	2	3	4	1	6	7	5
E25	2	3	4	1	6	7	5
E26	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E27	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E28	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
E29	1	3	4	2	7	6	5
E30	1	3	4	2	7	6	5
E31	1	3	4	2	6	5	7
E32	1	3	4	2	6	5	7
Mean(S.D.)	1.06(0.25)	2.59(0.49)	5.22(1.50)	2.34(0.60)	6.25(0.44)	4.97(0.97)	5.56(0.91)
Group Rank	1	3	5	2	7	4	6
Kendall's W of 0.831; p-value < 0.001							

Discussion

The study assessed expert agreement on the frequency of EAP use in Philippine schools using Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W). The findings showed a high degree of consensus among the experts (Kendall's $W = 0.831$, $p < 0.05$), with the dimension of 'EAP as a tool for discipline and behavior management' as the most significant. The dimensions following in importance were Lack of Knowledge about Disciplinary Measures, Social Pressure of Using EAP, EAP for Physical Health, EAP as a Display of Authority, and EAP for Academic Performance and Athletic Performance. The high Kendall's W value indicates a substantial agreement among the experts on these dimensions.

EAP as a tool for discipline and behavior management

This study found that the most significant reason for using EAP in schools is to improve discipline and behavior management. This is because exercise is believed to help people develop self-control and discipline, which can help them follow the rules and take responsibility for their actions (Battaglia & Kerr, 2022; Kerr et al., 2020). By requiring students to perform physical activities as punishment, they may learn to control their behavior and make better choices. Although positive disciplinary approaches are being adopted in child-related settings and schools, research on behavior management in PE and sports suggests that punishment is still used to modify student-athlete behavior. For instance, researchers have studied common forms of punishment used in sports, such

as excessive exercise (e.g., running until exhaustion) as consequences of undesirable behavior (Battaglia et al., 2017; Battaglia et al., 2018; Burak et al., 2013; Richardson et al., 2012). Furthermore, the cultural emphasis on machismo within the Philippines (Navera, 2021), characterized by an idealization of strength, toughness, and dominance, may exacerbate the utilization of exercise as punishment. This sociocultural context can reinforce the perception of strenuous physical activity as a legitimate disciplinary tool for children and adolescents. It further solidifies the notion that physical exertion is primarily a means to enforce compliance and adherence to authority, rather than promoting it as an intrinsically valuable component of health and well-being.

These punitive methods have been linked to adverse outcomes for athletes, including fatigue, injury, poor relationships with coaches, and negative self-perception (Battaglia et al., 2018; Kerr et al., 2016). Researchers have even suggested that it could be psychological or non-contact physical abuse (Fortier et al., 2020; Stirling, 2009). The presence of punitive EAP practices calls for comprehensive investigations into their efficacy and long-term effects on students. To foster holistic development and well-being, educational policies should actively guide schools away from using EAP and promote positive behavior management strategies.

Social Pressure of Using EAP

The study's findings show that social pressure is a prevailing reason for using EAP in schools. This finding is consistent with the findings of previous studies. For

example, Tanucan et al. (2023) found that PE teachers who feel more social pressure to use exercise as a disciplinary measure are more likely to use EAP. This finding was supported by Burak et al. (2014), who found that attitudes and subjective norms accounted for nearly 70% of the variation in participants' responses to the use of EAP. Social pressure has been considered a fundamental concept in social psychology and public health. It refers to a person's perceived level of pressure from their essential others (e.g., family, friends, co-workers) when practicing a particular action or making a choice (Han et al., 2021). For instance, people are likely to feel pressure if they behave against their significant others' beliefs (e.g., using EAP) (Tanucan et al., 2023). Social pressure to use EAP in the Philippines may also be apparent given the country's value of social conformity. The country puts a strong emphasis on fitting in and following the group's norms. This can lead to people feeling pressure to use EAP, even if they do not believe it is the best way to manage student behavior. In this case, social pressure to use EAP may come from various sources, including parents, administrators, and other teachers. Parents may believe that exercise is a good way to punish children and may be more accepting when teachers use EAP for disciplining. Administrators may also believe that exercise is a good way to discipline students. Other teachers may also use EAP, which could create a culture of punishment in the school.

In the Philippines, the persistence of EAP despite the discouragement of punitive practices in schools (Andrade, 2016) can be attributed to a complex interplay of cultural factors. A traditional emphasis on discipline and obedience, deeply ingrained in Filipino society, may lead some educators to view EAP as a way to instill respect for authority and correct perceived misbehavior. The cultural value placed on hard work and physical exertion may also contribute to the acceptance of EAP, as it is seen as a means to build character and resilience through physical challenges. Furthermore, undermining positive reinforcement-based approaches to discipline (Banzon-Librojo et al., 2017), coupled with the lasting influence of colonial education systems that emphasized rote learning and strict discipline (DeStephano, 2011), can perpetuate the use of EAP in schools. However, the landscape is gradually shifting. There is a growing awareness of the potential negative consequences of EAP, including its potential to undermine students' intrinsic motivation, create negative associations with physical activity, and even cause physical harm. Many educators, researchers, and child welfare advocates actively advocate for positive reinforcement-based approaches that focus on building relationships, fostering intrinsic motivation, and addressing the root causes of misbehavior. This ongoing dialogue reflects a growing recognition of the need to move away from punitive practices and towards more supportive

and effective methods for promoting student well-being and learning.

EAP for Physical Health

A growing body of literature reports that EAP may benefit physical health. For instance, Carolina Performance (2015) found that many professionals use EAP to improve their stakeholders' health. Similarly, Aasland et al. (2017) found that teachers use EAP to improve their students' physical fitness and health while promoting compliance. This belief may have come from the fact that exercise has been shown to benefit many aspects of health and well-being. Also, advocates of EAP may argue that it can be a valuable tool for promoting physical activity and improving health outcomes when implemented responsibly and ethically. They may emphasize the importance of tailoring exercise programs to individual needs and abilities, ensuring adequate rest and recovery, and avoiding excessive pressure or coercion. Additionally, some studies suggest that EAP may be particularly beneficial for certain populations, such as individuals with chronic health conditions or those struggling with motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, further research is needed to fully understand the potential benefits and risks of EAP and to develop guidelines for its safe and effective use.

The use of EAP remains controversial. Critics argue that forcing individuals to exercise excessively can create negative associations with physical activity, potentially leading to decreased participation and even harm. Research by Burak et al. (2013), Kerr et al. (2020), and Rosenthal et al. (2010) supports this concern, highlighting potential negative consequences like decreased enjoyment of exercise, physical injury, and overexertion. Furthermore, EAP can have detrimental effects on athletes, such as increased fatigue, strained relationships with coaches, and negative self-perception (Battaglia et al., 2018; Kerr et al., 2016).

EAP as a Display of Authority

This study also reveals that EAP can function as a display of authority, echoing findings by Battaglia et al. (2018) and Kerr et al. (2020), who highlight its use by coaches and teachers to establish control. Punishment, defined as the imposition of negative consequences by an authority figure in response to perceived wrongdoing (Geeraets, 2018), is inherently linked to asserting dominance. Its goal is to deter repetition of the targeted behavior. Therefore, when teachers employ EAP, they implicitly communicate their power to compel students to comply with their directives. This practice may be further amplified by the Philippines' emphasis on machismo, a cultural value advocating for strength, toughness, and dominance (Navera, 2021). This can strengthen the notion

that exercise is a suitable punishment for children and adolescents to enforce conformity to rules and expectations set by authority figures. Notably, Kerr et al. (2016) identify coaches' perceived control as a factor contributing to the normalization of questionable practices, including punishment, within sports. While EAP may establish short-term control, its long-term consequences can be detrimental. Punished students might harbor resentment, defy authority, and exhibit reduced motivation for learning and growth. Researchers highlight the potential for EAP to constitute psychological or non-contact physical abuse (Fortier et al., 2020; Stirling, 2009), fostering fear and intimidation and jeopardizing students' mental and emotional well-being. Moreover, overreliance on disciplinary power can trap teachers in a cycle of negativity, abandoning positive pedagogical approaches in favor of punitive ones, ultimately fostering an overly rigid and potentially abusive classroom environment.

EAP for Academic Performance

Using exercise as a punishment for poor academic performance is demonstrably ineffective and ethically questionable. This practice, condemned by SHAPE America (2021) and other professional organizations, can have detrimental consequences for students. Associating physical activity with negative repercussions risks fostering negative perceptions of exercise, potentially discouraging students from adopting healthy, active lifestyles ("What Are Key Strategies/Approaches to Prevent Using Physical Activity as Punishment in Teaching and/or Coaching?", 2015). Furthermore, forced exercise can lead to decreased motivation, physical injury, and even psychological distress (Yulian et al., 2019), jeopardizing students' overall well-being. Linking academic success with strenuous physical exertion also contradicts the fundamental principle of holistic education, which promotes the harmonious development of both cognitive and physical capacities (Burak et al., 2013). From an ethical standpoint, using EAP raises concerns about potential mental or physical mistreatment, and may even carry legal and regulatory implications for educational institutions (Rico, 2002). A far more effective approach is to cultivate a positive association with physical activity and integrate it as a vital component of students' holistic well-being. By fostering positive attitudes and promoting the inherent benefits of exercise, we can empower students to embrace active lifestyles and optimize their overall development.

EAP for Athletic Performance

The use of EAP to improve athletic performance is fundamentally incompatible with sound sports training and coaching principles. While some research suggests the continued prevalence of punishment, particularly in the form of additional physical activity (Kerr et al., 2020),

this approach is demonstrably counterproductive. Athletes require a balanced interplay of training, recovery, and motivation to reach their full potential (Ryan et al., 2009). Imposing additional physical exertion as punishment disrupts this crucial balance, generating physiological and psychological strain that can hinder performance and overall well-being. Furthermore, it risks fostering negativity and undermining the athlete's intrinsic desire and enjoyment of their sport. A more effective strategy involves developing personalized training plans tailored to individual needs and goals (Serrano et al., 2013; Wackerhage & Schoenfeld, 2021). Cultivating a supportive and encouraging training environment through positive reinforcement, constructive feedback, and goal setting fosters optimal development and performance (Höpfner & Keith, 2021; Williamson et al., 2022). Prioritizing rest, recovery, and injury prevention further enhances long-term athletic success. Ultimately, a holistic coaching approach that addresses both the physical and mental well-being of athletes is demonstrably more effective in achieving lasting performance improvements than one that relies on punitive measures (Gurgis et al., 2023). By embracing this approach, coaches can create a positive and enriching environment that unlocks the full potential of their athletes.

Lack of Knowledge about Disciplinary Measures

This study found that teachers' lack of knowledge about effective disciplinary measures, which includes undermining individual student needs like learning styles, physical limitations, and cultural sensitivities, insufficient awareness of potential negative consequences, limited awareness of positive discipline methods, and following flawed assumptions in using EAP. These findings align with previous research (Reinke et al., 2013; Scott et al., 2011) showing low rates of proactive approaches like positive feedback and high rates of reactive measures like reprimands. This study builds on the advocacy of Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (2017), suggesting that those who believe in corporal punishment often lack knowledge about positive discipline, children's rights, and healthy child development. They may also misunderstand the ineffectiveness and negative impacts of corporal punishment on learning and wellbeing, as well as the fundamental difference between punishment and discipline. Teachers may also fail to appreciate the many pressures facing children, which may impact on their ability to learn and on their behaviour. All of these topics should be covered during initial and in-service teacher training. This reliance on reactive practices could be attributed to several factors, a lack of clear self-evaluation that emphasizes what specifically constitutes 'effective practice' (Timperley, 2015).

Teachers may not be aware of how different students learn and process information. Using EAP for misbe-

having students, regardless of their learning style, can be ineffective and even counterproductive. For example, a student with ADHD might struggle to focus after strenuous physical activity, hindering their learning. Teachers may not be familiar with or considerate of students' physical limitations or disabilities. Forcing exercise on such students can lead to physical discomfort, injuries, or exacerbation of existing conditions (Tanucan et al., 2023). Cultural backgrounds and values can influence how students perceive and respond to physical activity. Teachers lacking awareness of these sensitivities might inadvertently use exercise in a way that is offensive or disrespectful to certain students (Allday, 2011). Furthermore, while the surface of EAP seems like a harmless consequence for misbehavior, a deeper look reveals a hidden minefield of potential harm. This practice, often driven by good intentions (Kerr et al., 2020), can inadvertently inflict lasting damage on students' physical and mental well-being, motivation, and even the delicate fabric of teacher-student relationships (Battaglia et al., 2018; Kerr et al., 2016).

Furthermore, experts believe that when faced with challenging behaviors and limited options, some teachers fall back on outdated methods like EAP. While these methods might seem quick and easy, they often leave students feeling humiliated and demotivated, failing to address the underlying reasons for their behavior. This reliance on outdated practices highlights a broader need for comprehensive training and support in positive discipline for teachers to effectively manage challenging situations without resorting to harmful approaches. Finally, experts believe that some teachers have the assumption that EAP deters misbehavior, which is often flawed. They may assume a straightforward cause-and-effect relationship between physical activity and behavior, ignoring the complex factors that influence students' development and behavior. Misconduct can stem from a variety of issues, like social or emotional difficulties, learning challenges, or even family situations (Orejudo et al., 2020). By focusing solely on EAP, the approach overlooks the underlying reasons behind the misbehavior. Addressing these root causes, such as providing support for specific needs or addressing underlying emotional issues, is crucial for long-term behavioral change. Furthermore, not all students respond to exercise in the same way. Some might benefit from the stress-reducing and mood-boosting effects of physical activity, leading to improved behavior. Others might not find it helpful or might even experience increased anxiety or frustration in certain exercise environments (Tanucan et al., 2023).

Conclusions

Despite evidence of its detrimental effects on students, the use of EAP persists in Philippine schools. This study

reveals key drivers beyond simple teacher preference. Notably, a misguided belief in EAP's effectiveness for discipline remains prevalent, particularly among teachers who may lack adequate resources or training. This approach, often influenced by traditional Filipino cultural norms that sometimes view physical discipline as a form of tough love, overlooks the root causes of misbehavior, which may be rooted in socio-economic factors, learning difficulties, or emotional distress, and may create negative associations with physical activity. External pressures from parents, administrators, and peers, often rooted in traditional views on discipline, also contribute. These stakeholders may equate EAP with effective teaching, perpetuating a harmful cycle. Additionally, some teachers may use EAP to assert authority, a practice that can be reinforced by hierarchical structures in some Filipino schools, further undermining trust and positive learning environments. A lack of awareness and training in alternative disciplinary methods exacerbates the issue. This highlights the need for comprehensive professional development, providing teachers with evidence-based strategies that prioritize student well-being and positive behavior change.

Limitations

The sampling methodology in this study presents potential limitations that may have influenced the results. While we aimed to include a diverse range of PE professionals from across the Philippines, the overrepresentation of participants from Cebu City introduces the possibility of geographic bias. This could mean that the perspectives and experiences of PE professionals in other regions may not be adequately reflected in the findings. Furthermore, the recruitment strategy, which relied on mutual contacts, may have inadvertently led to a sample of participants who share similar viewpoints and professional networks. This potential for homophily among participants could have introduced bias into the Delphi process, as individuals may be more likely to conform to the opinions of their peers. Future research could mitigate these limitations by implementing a more stratified sampling approach, ensuring proportionate representation from different regions and diverse professional backgrounds within the field of PE. Additionally, employing a double-blind Delphi method, where participants are unaware of each other's identities, could help to minimize the potential for bias stemming from pre-existing relationships and social influence.

Recommendation

Transitioning away from EAP necessitates a multi-faceted, collaborative approach involving school leaders, educators, and caregivers. School administrators should prioritize dispelling misconceptions about EAP's efficacy through evidence-based workshops and informational

campaigns, while investing in comprehensive professional development programs that equip staff with positive discipline methodologies, such as conflict resolution strategies. Establishing regular communication channels, like parent-teacher conferences and student-led forums, can facilitate open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving around disciplinary issues. Implementing a data-driven approach to discipline, utilizing tracking systems to identify potential disparities, can inform equitable policy adjustments. Simultaneously, empowering teachers with a robust toolkit of positive discipline strategies, along with ongoing professional development on child development, trauma-informed practices, and culturally responsive pedagogy can foster a more supportive classroom environment. Mentorship programs and collaborative platforms for educators to share best practices can further enhance their capacity to address behavioral challenges constructively.

Engaging parents through educational workshops on positive parenting techniques, child development milestones, and effective communication strategies can cultivate a supportive home environment that reinforces the school's positive discipline approach. Strengthening parent-teacher partnerships through regular communication, collaborative problem-solving, and shared decision-making can further solidify a unified front in promoting student well-being and positive behavior. This multi-pronged, systemic approach aims to create a nurturing and inclusive school environment that prioritizes student well-being, fosters positive behavior change through evidence-based practices, and ensures equitable treatment for all students, ultimately dismantling the reliance on punitive disciplinary measures like EAP.

Ethics

This study were reviewed and approved by The Ethical Committee of the INTI International University (Ref. No. INTI/UEC/2023/025).

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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