

## Integrating Life-Wide Learning in the Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science Program in Selected State Universities in Region III: A Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigates the Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BESS) program curriculum within Region III, specifically studying its alignment with the Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 81, series of 2017, to distinguish potential curriculum and policy developments that backing life-wide learning and student employability. The research identifies existing gaps in career alignment, stakeholder engagement, graduate employability preparation, and policies supporting lifelong learning within the curriculum. Through multiple case study design, it explores curricular practices, instructional strategies, student engagement, and assessment methods at two state universities, emphasizing their unique approaches to practical learning, community involvement, and stakeholder collaboration. Findings reveal significant areas such as institutional support, curricular planning, and stakeholder engagement, underscoring variations in each institution's strategies to address community needs, facilitate student-centered learning, and prepare graduates for the sports and fitness industry. The two institutions demonstrate strong commitment to curriculum implementation through initiatives like experiential learning and community engagement, although with distinct approaches influenced by local demands. Challenges highlighted include infrastructure limitations, stakeholder involvement irregularities, and the need for enhanced policy support. Future directions for the BESS program involve expanding student engagement through global internships, certification programs, and partnerships with local government units (LGUs) to foster community-based health initiatives, while ongoing curriculum reviews ensure alignment with industry demands and societal needs.

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## INTRODUCTION

The concept of "lifelong learning," which describes the progression through the different life stages that begin when we are babies, continue through childhood, adolescence, maturity, middle and old age, and finally culminate in death, is familiar to all higher education professionals. When considered in this light, formal schooling accounts for a very small percentage of the learning experiences that most people have throughout their lives. Most of their lives are devoted to self-improvement and informal experience learning, which includes time spent at college and university, as well as before and after school.

Corollary to this, the current study investigated the life-wide learning curriculum and delved deeper into how the programs coexist or center around their provisions. As a result, its findings may have implications for conducting new research or developing innovative strategies that can be used to improve the curriculum's practices.

The initial step was prompted by the inquisitive attitude of the researcher in identifying the nagging problem in need of a solution, although it was difficult at first, a review of the new program curriculum implementation revealed a current state of knowledge. It was borne out of the issue to take fresh and deliverable perspectives of the data that could be culled out. The assessment of the issue on curriculum contains information of primary interest to the researcher and hopefully to the consumers of research. The feasibility to conduct then make clear and exact questions put forward: Do the program graduates have a future waiting for them in their home communities? Who is going to hire them? Is their diploma sufficient for them to work as a gym instructor or in the fitness industry? Did the university give them a good enough education to prepare them for the workforce? Are they (graduates) prepared to take on the burden of the rising obesity rate or to fight the world's leading cause of death—physical inactivity, which can result in a variety of cardiovascular diseases—or both?

The exploration of this study, which pertains to the BSESS curriculum, presents gaps as needed for greater clarity on career alignment, a lack of commitment in integrating life-wide learning, minimal engagement of stakeholders, vague direction for graduate employability and work placement readiness, and limited opportunities and policies that support lifelong learning goals.

In a future that is constantly shifting, people find themselves caught between expectation and uncertainty. They must prepare for the challenges of the future because their careers serve as the cornerstone of their existence. Several strategies are used in the process of becoming ready, such as aspects of adaptability, continuing education, tactical planning, and personal development. Considering how the job status of a bachelor's degree in exercise and sports science is seen globally and how it is growing over time, I believe that this program can serve as an excellent platform for future professionals to develop a lifelong career strategy.

Life-wide learning promotes a holistic education by integrating experiences from work, home, play, and social settings, allowing students to engage in diverse learning activities that foster a complete identity (Murat et al., 2016). When curriculum developers collaborate with technological teams and instructional designers, the curriculum becomes more comprehensive. This learner-centered approach, which focuses on individual interests and essential life skills, enhances life-wide learning and provides equal educational opportunities with flexibility in time and space.

In the context of education, life-wide learning, as described by J. Reischmann (2019), encompasses learning in diverse settings—formal, non-formal, and informal—integrating various life situations. It acknowledges that education is a lifelong process beyond traditional classrooms, aiming to enhance social, cognitive, and personal growth. This approach prepares individuals for a complex environment, promoting personal development and economic growth.

The Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BSESS) program, as guided by the Commission on Higher Education's policies, provides graduates with a comprehensive understanding of applied exercise and sports sciences for roles in fitness and sports across different sectors. It supports coaching licensure and certifications, prepping graduates for careers in fitness coaching, sport management, and wellness roles. However, graduates may face unclear career pathways despite a memorandum outlining professional fields, and there are challenges in meeting educational needs and resources.

Zhuang et al. (2017) indicate that smart city learning environments positively impact citizens' education. The relationship between school and other learning contexts is complex, with research showing strong links between schools, museums, and communities.

Additionally, Qitoras and Abuso (2021) highlight diverse research cultures among three Philippine Higher Education Institutions that foster best practices in research management.

Encouraging a safe and well-developed curriculum can lead to student success. Teachers must understand their students' future aspirations to keep them engaged. Gabay and Voyles (2020) emphasize that colleges need to meet the demands of today's global learners. They highlight the rising expectations for faculty engagement and innovative teaching methods in online education, stressing the importance of managing change in higher education.

Adopting best practices is essential for excellence, equity, and innovation in higher education. This allows institutions to attract top students and secure funding. Rhinehart (2022) discusses how partnerships between academia and industry can enhance educational quality, benefitting both students and businesses. Greater collaboration could lead to a more employable graduate pool, bridging the gap between industry needs and academic offerings.

Gogoi (2019) argues that students need personalized, future-focused career guidance. Instructors should connect their curriculum with students' career interests to foster motivation and resilience. McAlpine (2019) highlights case studies showing varying approaches to integrating Career Development Learning (CDL) into curricula, demonstrating collaborative strategies at different institutions. Work placements provide students with valuable hands-on experiences, enabling them to build skills, networks, and confidence crucial for career success.

A study by Qitoras and Abuso (2021) emphasizes the role of co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Siaya County, Kenya. Schools encourage participation in activities like athletics, music, and soccer, which are seen as vital for learners' holistic development.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

This study explored the life-wide learning curricula of the Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BSESS) Program in Region III with an end view of curriculum enhancement for the employability of their graduates.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the curriculum be described in terms of Intent, Content, Approaches, and Evaluation
2. How do the existing policies in the program affect the life-wide learning curricula of the BSESS program?
3. What are the issues and challenges to the life-wide learning curricula in the BSESS program?
4. Based on the findings, what curriculum enhancement may be proposed to support the life-wide learning curricula of the BSESS Program for the employability of its graduates?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

To illuminate and apprehend the life-wide learning curricula of the BSESS program of State University in Region 3. This case study includes an in-depth examination of the life-wide learning curricula of the Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science and its alignment with the CMO no. 81 series of 2017. Gall et al. (1996) defined case study research as "the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon." The case study approach allows the researcher to explore not only the implementation of the policy, guidelines, and standards of the programs but it investigated the practices and existing policies that addressed the gaps encountered by the institution offering the BSESS program.

The multiple case study is the primary design that was employed in this study to yield comprehensive accounts of the BSESS program's execution of curriculum for life-wide learning, which may be addressed by potential policy recommendations or enhancement of the curriculum made after the study's conclusion. According to Yin (1994), the robustness of the findings is increased when several examples replicate the patterns, strengthening the results. There are two ways to construct replication logic: theoretical replication, where the examples are meant to cover diverse theoretical conditions, and literal replication, where the cases are made to corroborate each other. Yin (1984) suggests that case studies focus on analytical rather than statistical generalizations, hence using replication logic gives the results external confirmation. Every instance supported or refuted the findings.

However, to finally proceed with the multiple case study design the research must dwell on the understanding of the individual cases of the group first which can be aided by the single class study as single case studies begin with identifying a theoretical framework, conducting a literature review, and identifying the research problem (Merriam, 1988). By switching between these tasks, researchers establish a solid foundation that guided the rest of the research process. The theoretical framework guided the course of the investigation because it is specific to the orientation or perspective of the researchers.

To produce depth in the cross-case analysis, researchers must choose individual examples that will be included in the study. This ensures that the cases are sufficiently similar to each other. To produce depth in similarities and contrasts that might reveal phenomena without sacrificing the distinctiveness of each example, selection can include cases that represent a variety of interests, attributes, extremes, or ideal kinds.

### Participants, sampling methods, and research locale

This study utilized a purposeful sampling technique. Purposeful sampling is an efficient selection technique when using many cases or sampling inside a case. Purposeful sampling was used in this study to enable focus on the phenomenon in detail by carefully choosing the case and the people, records, and artifacts that are included in it. It investigates examples with a wealth of information from which you can get a deep understanding of topics that are crucial to study. When drawing a large sample from the population under study, qualitative researchers rarely worry about it. According to Flick (2009), instances or individuals are chosen for qualitative study based on their relevance to the research topic rather than because they reflect on the public and raise questions about generalizability.

On the other hand, purposeful sampling searches outside of the general population for individuals or situations that provide insight into the specific situation under investigation. Like most qualitative research, case studies typically have small sample numbers, which is why Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU) and Bulacan State University (BuSU) were pre-surveyed and chosen for this study since they are the institutions that have been offering the BSESS program. These two (2) participating institutions were from the Higher Education Institutions, which are located within Region III. These schools

are committed to providing quality education to be responsive to the community and the industry. The two (2) schools joined in this study are Bulacan State University (BulSU) who have six (6) participants and Bataan Peninsula State University with five (5) participants, who are both known for their Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Sciences.

### **Inclusion criteria**

Three or four different examples for comparison were the maximum number of cases that can be handled in a realistic multiple-case study. The goal of this study is to have discussions with several participants as follows: 1) with one or two pioneer instructors from each university who have been teaching BSESS from the program's establishment and in case of no faculty who known as pioneer employee of the program, those available faculty who rendered one year and who is handling the major subject. 2) Head/s, from each targeted school, since the program head is the main person involved in the delivery of the operation, particularly in the execution of their curriculum, and 3) College Dean/s, one from each school, since the college dean oversees the faculty and is one of who oversee the offerings of all the programs, they will also be involved in this study. To further complement and improve the data from the participants, 4) the adviser of the organization related to the program will also take part in this study to examine their programs and activities implemented as part of the co-curricular and extra-curricular ventures. Lastly, (5) the president of the accredited student organization of the program is also part of this undertaking as a representative of the group that benefited from the activities of the BSESS program.

### **Exclusion criteria**

This study aims to explore how the educational institution uses the CMO No. 81 series of 2017 to implement the curriculum for the BSESS program and look at ways to make curricular and policy changes that would align with lifelong learning curricula. Participants who were excluded from the study if they meet any of the following criteria like 1) Teachers who do not teach specialized subjects within the BSESS program, and 3) Community members or stakeholders who are not directly contributing to the program. While they may be beneficiaries of the study outcomes, their participation will only be considered if students from the BSESS program are actively engaged in their organizations participants who fall under any of these categories will not be eligible to participate in the study.

### **Research instruments**

The research topics guided the process of gathering data for case studies. Based on the research objectives, the researcher chose what to look for, what documents to review, what objects to inspect, and what questions to ask during an interview. A case study therefore made use of information from several sources. The research questions for this case study were qualitative research designs. Yin (2018) enumerated the following as potential sources of evidence: participant observation, direct observation, interviews, archival materials, documentation, and tangible artifacts. Stake (1995) noted, "What one does in the field, from gaining access to triangulating data, needs to be guided by the research questions," supporting the direction given by the research questions.

**Interview.** A good case study question delivered a powerful message to lead in the decision stage of prospective participants' journeys. Since they agreed to participate in the study, good case study questions made them more enthusiastic to provide the necessary responses. Open-ended questions were asked to encourage discussions about excellent situations or phenomena experienced on the topic. To ensure consistency in the interviews with each subject, a series of questions and prompts known as the interview method were followed. Protocols were useful in this regard. To ensure that interview subjects

understood what to look for and how the observation contributed to their research goals, protocols were also essential for observation.

**Document review.** The researcher sought out important data that existed to support the claim for the BSESS. Similarly, the researcher ascertained in advance what was required for the research and ensured that they comprehended how physical things and documents helped to answer the research difficulties. The researcher looked for the syllabus, training programs, proposals of the accomplished activities, and other pertinent documents that supported their curricular programs.

### **Trustworthiness (validation) of the collected data**

After the visits to the area of the participants, data were gathered accordingly, which lasted for one (2) week with some disruptions due to the cancelation of classes. Some of the participants were difficult to interview because of their schedules, however, some of them were willing to fully participate in the interview.

Documents were sought first as it must be reviewed before the interview process. Some of the pertinent papers are not available. After every encounter with the targeted participants, member checking can be sought for the credibility of the data gathered.

Following the initial data analysis, summarized findings were confidently shared with the participants, particularly the Dean and Program heads from both institutions, for their invaluable feedback. They played a critical role in identifying themes and patterns, confirming, clarifying, or challenging our interpretations of their responses. We held follow-up meetings where participants actively engaged in assessing the accuracy of the data representation and affirmed whether their experiences were effectively captured.

### **Data gathering procedures**

The research topics guided the process of gathering data for case studies. Stake (1995) added that collecting data virtually invariably entailed entering someone else's "home grounds," which constituted "a small invasion of personal privacy." Necessary steps like securing consent were followed, which were usually obtained in conjunction with informed consent and institutional review board approval, including the intended purpose and distribution of the finished report.

It was important to preserve an electronic or physical file system that aided in the organization of the notes, papers, tales, and other materials to create a database specifically for this subject. This study incorporated guide questions, document review and other narratives. The voice recording was used in the recording of the interview. The Software was used to organize this investigation. In addition, it set time limits for obtaining information from electronic sources and established a chain of evidence by tracking the conclusions backward through databases or notes. It was crucial to double and triple-check everything for this research. Typically, researchers employed one main data source along with one or more secondary sources to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject; interviews are the primary source of information and archival records as a secondary data source

### **Data analysis**

The process of analyzing data, or content, consists of various stages, including description, interpretation, conclusion-making, and significance assessment. The following processes are typically involved in case study data analysis: (1) coding, (2) describing, (3) emerging findings, and (4) comparing. Knowing the "who," "what," "when," and "where" of the situation being studied is essential to this research. The descriptive phase of the data analysis entails many readings and reviews of all the data that was gathered.

Before beginning a cross-case study, the researcher went over the single-case reports that have been analyzed and the notes that the researchers have made during the process. Individual case data are typically not reanalyzed, and no fresh data are gathered for analysis of many case studies. The researcher has carefully examined individual case studies, and all the data required to finish the cross-case analysis should be included in the case reports. The goal is to apply information from single case reports to the theme-based description of the Quintain, albeit occasionally, scholars may need to go back to the raw data to locate a quote or explanation.

The research process began with a thorough collection of essential information and a detailed review of relevant documents necessary for in-depth data analysis. To facilitate this, the researchers utilized MAXQDA software, dedicating time to understanding its functionalities. Before the analysis, the researcher transcribed the interviews, ensuring that these transcripts were seamlessly imported into the software for examination.

Initially, the researcher engaged in a careful reading of all interview narratives to ensure that no significant elements were overlooked. The analysis started with data from Bulacan State University (BuSU) and later incorporated insights from Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU), following an inductive approach to guide the findings. Once the transcripts were successfully imported, the researcher initiated the first level of coding, marking a pivotal moment in the process.

The within-case analysis involved a detailed examination of each case, uncovering unique themes and patterns. The researcher organized qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, through a systematic coding process that categorized significant data pieces into meaningful codes representing various concepts or themes. Depending on preference and data volume, this coding could be executed either manually or with software.

After coding, the researcher constructed narratives for each case, summarizing key findings and providing context. This is to identify the terms relevant to the case, which could easily understood as this study tells us how the participants revolve around the problem. This narrative approach created a coherent story that reflected the experiences and perspectives of participants, making the complexities of each case more accessible.

In pursuit of a deeper understanding, all interviews underwent rigorous review, with researchers examining the texts multiple times. This thorough examination aimed to capture the essence of the BSESS program from both institutions, demonstrating meticulous attention to detail. The analysis was conducted with precision, scrutinizing the data word by word, line by line, and paragraph by paragraph. By fragmenting the information, the researcher identified specific words or clusters, which were then assigned unique codes.

The final strategy involved sorting patterns within the data, where descriptive labels were categorized into smaller sets to identify overarching themes. Codes that shared similar characteristics were grouped into categories known as basic concepts, which were then further clustered based on their commonalities. This approach ultimately integrated them into the main themes of the study, providing a comprehensive understanding of the data collected.

Following the within-case analysis, a cross-case analysis was conducted to draw meaningful comparisons between cases. This step was crucial for identifying overarching themes and understanding how varying contexts influence the phenomenon studied. The researcher systematically compared findings across cases, creating matrices or thematic maps to visually represent relationships among them. Recognizing differences between cases also held importance, as it helped us to understand how diverse contexts and demographics might lead to varying outcomes or perceptions, thereby enriching the overall understanding of the research problem

Stake (2006) suggested that a single person should complete the multiple case study report, even though numerous researchers can be involved in the single case study data collection. Comparing reports side by side should enable the researcher to put data sources or information that was used in one case

but not another, or that was acquired in one situation but not another, into perspective. These data can be added to the cross-case analysis if they were gathered for individual cases but were left out of the case report. The researcher has the option to review, examine, and include the raw data from that specific report in the cross-case analysis. This guarantees that the same data points were gathered for every case. Should it be relevant, it should be mentioned or recorded during member-checking if no data were gathered at all. The researcher should start mapping the representation of Quintain themes in each case by comparing reports side by side and noting where these themes were represented in each one.

### **Ethical consideration**

Before agreeing to join, participants must be made fully aware of the nature, goals, and potential hazards of the study. The researcher will ensure transparency by disclosing all relevant information regarding the study, including its goals, methods, possible advantages, and associated dangers. The participants are entitled to withdraw from the study at any point without incurring any penalties.

To maintain the validity and impartiality of research findings, it is crucial to openly disclose any conflicts of interest. In addition, ethical considerations such as obtaining informed consent, minimizing harm, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, and managing conflicts of interest will be considered. By following these ethical guidelines, researchers can prioritize the well-being and rights of participants while conducting studies that are responsible, trustworthy, and respectful.

## **RESULTS**

By examining the dedication of SU1 and SU2 to fostering a better educational environment for their Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BSESS) students, this research expects to provide valuable insights into the particulars associated with curriculum delivery in exercise and sports science education.

This study was participated by two (2) institutions from the Higher Education Institution, which is located within Region III. These schools were striving to provide better quality education to be responsive to the community and the industry. The two (2) schools that joined in this study are SU1, who have six (6) participants and SU2 with five (5) participants, who are both known for their Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Sciences. These participants are composed of student leaders from the program's organization, adviser of the organization, pioneer teachers, program head, and the college dean.

Three (3) major themes and eight (8) sub-themes were revealed because of the case analysis while investigating the integration of life wide learning curricula in the BSESS Program. The themes revealed how they managed and prepared their program for its students by also integrating the life-wide learning curricula.

### **The Life-Wide Learning Curriculum of the BSESS Program**

This portion will reveal the "intent" provided by the instructors for the delivery of "content" of their lesson through different "approaches" along with the utilization of different evaluation or assessment to achieve the life-wide learning.

As the universities offering BSESS program experience challenges on different aspect like in the delivery of their lesson and with the provision of appropriate strategies that could prepare students in the future, this case study will feature both institutions' curricular major outcomes for the students, essential disciplines and topics that are included in the curriculum. Also, the typical educational approaches and tactics, and evaluation utilized are part of the discussion.

#### **Theme 1. Curricular delivery and practices.**



The major theme “Curricular Delivery and Practices” focuses on the diverse methods and procedures utilized in implementing the curriculum within educational institutions. It encompasses various teaching strategies, instructional techniques, and classroom practices that educators utilize to enhance student learning experiences.

In the context of lifelong learning, “Curricular Delivery and Practices” emphasizes the importance of extending learning beyond traditional academic environments and applying it to real-world situations. This theme highlights the connection between curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities involving both teachers and students. It examines how these practices contribute to promoting life-wide learning and program coherence with the overall curriculum, ensuring that educational experiences are meaningful and relevant in various contexts. The discovery of the BSESS programs at both SU1 and SU2 reveals important insight regarding curricular delivery and practices. This evaluation investigates into several sub-themes such as: Instructional Approaches and Strategies, Student Learning and Engagement, and Assessment and Evaluation.

**Approaches and strategies.** SU2’s and SU1 focus on enhancing their curriculum but they are different in their own ways since they have varied stakeholders within their location. SU2 enhanced their curriculum by adding important subjects and integrating practical learning and hands-on experiences, while SU1 added one academic year from its 3-year BSESS program to adapt in the changing employment landscape. With these changes, SU1 uphold distinct approaches towards the community engagement. SU1 emphasizes formal partnership to cater the needs of the community by engaging their students in various co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. This institution embraced noticeable approaches for the student’s learning like experiential learning, community engagement, continuous skill development, performance bases assessment, inclusivity and engagement. However, SU2 shared their practices like technology integration particular use of artificial intelligence, concept of “student extensionists”, certification opportunities while SU1 focused on the skill enhancement of the students since their institution known to be the best producers of Student-Athletes in the region III.

**Student learning and engagement.** SU1 shared their plans like investment in the infrastructure which contribute significantly to the student especially in their training. Conversely, SU2 have been taken the opportunity of their partners in the usage of their equipment and facilities even they have own fitness gym. Both institutions faced challenges when it comes to facilities and equipment but they one of their practices is to involve the student on the industries. Both institutions promote holistic development for student ensuring that their co-curricular and extra-curricular align with the program’s objectives, involvement in the local business-like fitness gym practices by the university which is integration of practical experience. Some of the students of both program joins with different coaching, training and officiating which highlighted how active both schools in community engagement which student-centered approach is evident.

SU1 offers different opportunities among the students like engagement outside the school and attendance in the different trainings and seminar to gain more certificates same with SU2 where student ask to undergo certification program. SU2 engages its students in different activities like the work-life balance and intramural which they served as the facilitators.

**Evaluation and assessment.** Both universities demonstrate effort on giving the best educational experiences through active program planning. Involvement if stakeholders in the curriculum development is one of the practice shown by the SU1 community when they undergone curriculum revision and development while the SU2 prioritizes the collaboration with the partner agency and organization for the students experience for them to evaluate the application of learning. Both institution is committed to practical application and continuous skills improvement which is important in the assessment and evaluation which can be seen their real-world applicability and to described the hands-on, client-based

learning as central to the curriculum. Both cases employed a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate student performance like using rubrics and performance tasks to align with learning outcomes, SU2 incorporates situational practices, and oral assessment to foster critical thinking and practical skills.

While both institutions have developed progressive strategies aimed at enhancing educational outcomes, their unique approaches to community involvement, infrastructure development, and curriculum modification reflect their specific institutional philosophies. By leveraging their strengths while tackling current obstacles, both universities can better equip their graduates for successful careers in the sports and fitness industry.

Skill development and certification are pivotal components of both universities' strategies aimed at improving employability. SU1 concentrates on cultivating coaching competencies aligned with industry requirements, whereas SU2 stresses the significance of obtaining essential credentials that prepare students for competitive job markets. Despite differing methodologies, both institutions are committed to community engagement through outreach initiatives that reflect an understanding of local priorities. SU1 seeks international collaborations to broaden students' horizons, while SU2 remains focused on meeting local community needs.

### **The commitment of the program on existing policies in the program that affects the life-wide learning curricula of BSESS program**

Universities that offer BSESS programs are required to give their students a worthwhile education that will help them in their future careers. This instructional responsibility is rooted in the programs' ingenuity in presenting their projects and including stakeholders in their operations. Policies have a major emphasis on providing a well-run, high-quality institution and offer efficient means of helping students grow before they graduate and become ready for the real world.

The purpose of this study is to examine the policies that impact the BSESS program's life-wide learning curricula and how the participating universities demonstrated initiatives, participated in curriculum development and revision, improved the curriculum's instruction for students, and dedicated their careers to changing their students' lives.

### **Theme 2. Commitment of the program.**

The "Commitment of the Program" refers to the dedication of educational institutions to creating a dynamic and responsive learning environment. This commitment encompasses a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing program development and underlines the importance of active involvement from all stakeholders, including students, educators, and the community. Continuous improvements in the program's quality and effectiveness reflect a collaborative vision for excellence.

Participants engage in various components like curriculum design, assessment strategies, and community outreach, working together to foster a comprehensive educational experience. By implementing feedback mechanisms and encouraging collaboration, educational institutions are able to adapt and refine their programs to meet the changing needs of students and the expectations of the professional landscape. This dedication ultimately results in improved student outcomes and greater success for the program overall, showcasing a proactive educational approach that values both individual growth and community impact.

The SU1 and SU2 showcased how dedicated their faculty in the delivery of their curriculum and worked out on different curricular practices to successfully deliver the program outcomes. Furthermore, both universities explored how important their part in the implementation of different activities, policies, and initiatives. This study's presents the commitment of the program which lead to two (2) sub-themes; (1) Program Initiatives and Involvement, and (2) Institutional Support and Policies.

**Initiatives and involvement.** To ensure that its students are prepared for their future careers, the two institutions are dedicated to giving them high-quality education. When implementing the curriculum,

these institutions place a strong emphasis on taking proactive measures. Planning to fill in the gaps and meet community needs within the educational framework is part of this. As part of a broader tendency to integrate real-world applications, each institution displays initiatives to improve research outputs and community involvement.

**Institutional support and policies.** The provision of comprehensive educational approaches that ensure students acquire critical knowledge for their futures all demonstrate the commitment to support and provide policies by the stakeholders' involvement in curriculum development and revision, faculty's use of technology in the classroom, and through various initiatives in research, community outreach, certification programs, and collaboration with organizations, both institutions are dedicated to improving the curriculum delivery of their programs. This is to get the student ready for how the sports and fitness sector is evolving. But neither organization was focusing on the program's written policies but this institution continuously striving to work on the policy which could support the student's employability and prepare them for the workplace.

By showing how curriculum modifications are influenced by stakeholder involvement and community requirements, the study's findings provide a substantial contribution to the larger area of sports education. Both SU1 and SU2 serve as excellent examples of how curricula must be continuously assessed and modified in order to remain relevant and effective in preparing graduates for fulfilling careers in exercise and sports science. This viewpoint is supported by the body of research that highlights responsive educational frameworks that take industry and societal responsibilities into account.

### **The facets of life-wide learning curricula in the BSESS program**

This study identifies the issues and challenges to the lifewide learning curricula in the BSESS program, however it also presents the programs' plan at opportunities for professional growth of the students under the program. This will not limit the barriers instead will also focus on the external and internal limitations, structural and logistical challenges, adherence to external factors such as accreditation requirements, regulatory framework, or societal expectations that has an impact on the life-wide learning curricula of the BSESS program.

Universities that offer BSESS programs are required to give their students a worthwhile education that will help them in their future careers. BSESS program is a newbie in its implementation and faces issues and challenges different aspects where the participants shared in this study their plans for the program which could offer opportunities among the stakeholders for their professional development.

### **Theme 3. Lifewide learning experience.**

The Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BSESS) program emphasizes the theme of "Life-wide Learning Experience," which focuses on providing students with diverse opportunities to engage in practical learning and problem-solving within the field. To overcome various challenges associated with this approach, educational institutions are implementing strategies that include forming partnerships with industry leaders, formally recognizing external learning experiences, and offering professional development opportunities that align with industry standards.

To create a more supportive environment that prepares students for successful careers, the BSESS program is enhancing resource allocation, exploring flexible scheduling options, and seeking external funding sources. These initiatives aim to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in their professional endeavors, despite any logistical or structural constraints they may face.

This study major focus is to investigate the life-wide learning experience of the student which led to three important sub-themes: (1) Issues and Challenges, (2) Program Plans, and (3) Opportunities.

**Life-wide issues and challenges.** By the objectives set forth by CHED Memorandum Order No. 81, both institutions are challenged to deliver the program successfully which some factors hindered their implementation like infrastructure and resource limitations, logistical challenges such as scheduling and overcrowded venues that they need to share with other classes. Limited community engagement, faculty qualifications, economic status factors, local and international partnership, employment opportunities, community perceptions, student willingness and skills, awareness of global opportunities, and social stigma are some of the issues and challenges faced by both institutions.

**Vision for the future.** However, with the existence of the issues and challenges of the program both institutions exhibit proactive strategies aimed at enriching educational experiences through lifewide learning. Both universities plan to enhance the employability of the graduates by integrating practical experiences such as internships and hands-on training to prepare for the job market effectively. The plans of the program like *Continuous Curriculum Development, Certification and Micro-credentialing, Global Competitiveness, Infrastructure Investment and Review of Career Pathways* are some of can be aimed at by the support of stakeholders and by addressing the issues and challenges. These plans can be changed according to the opportunities or challenges that may face in the future but good about this that even with the issues and challenges institutions providing excellent quality education for the students.

**Opportunities for professional development.** Their main plans are to include the stakeholders in their proposal like involvement various stakeholders in their curriculum development processes. Also, both programs plan to focus on employability and global competitiveness of the graduates by recognizing the global job market. Integration of comprehensive practical experiences, collaboration with external organizations, and emphasis on certification and micro-credentials are some of the plans of both programs

## DISCUSSIONS

### Theme 1. Curricular delivery and practices

The theme “Curricular Delivery and Practices” presented various methodologies, techniques as well as practices distinct in both institutions, which were employed to effectively implement the curriculum within their educational environment. This theme addresses the components that teachers use to improve student learning and skills. This encloses instructional strategies, classroom interactions, and pedagogical approaches. As this study examined the curricula of the BSESS program, some modifications were observed to meet the needs of the diverse learners and how the theoretical concepts are applied in practical situations.

**Sub-theme 1.1. Approaches and strategies.** This study explores various educational practices and strategies for integrating curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular elements within the Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BSESS) programs at Bulacan State University (BuSU) and Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU). Both institutions implement experiential learning and life-wide learning frameworks, emphasizing that learning occurs in diverse settings beyond the classroom. Reischmann (2019) describes life-wide learning as encompassing experiences in public spaces, workplaces, and communities, enabling personal and professional growth.

BPSU emphasizes community engagement within its BSESS curriculum, aligning with life-wide learning by promoting health initiatives in local communities. This approach, supported by Pisani et al. (2016), enhances education’s relevance by connecting it to real-life contexts. While BuSU integrates technology in lectures, BPSU has adopted AI tools, highlighting different strategies to meet 21st-century learners' needs, as noted by Gabay and Voyles (2020).

BulSU and BPSU also prioritize lifelong learning to prepare BSESS graduates for evolving career demands, as discussed by Murat et al. (2016). Engaging students in co-curricular activities further fosters social skills and emotional intelligence (Dynamics and Learning, 2023). BulSU's CSER Week and sports leagues reflect Evans and Forbes' (2020) findings that extracurriculars enhance leadership and engagement, while Becker (2018) affirms community-based learning as vital for civic responsibility.

Both universities collaborate with local industries for on-the-job training, establishing structured partnerships that bridge theory and practice, thus fostering employability. This hands-on approach aligns with Darling-Hammond et al. (2019), who emphasize student autonomy in leadership development. These co-curricular and extracurricular initiatives within BSESS programs support holistic development, preparing graduates for careers in exercise and sports science. To enhance outcomes, the universities should assess resources, improve certifications, and continually adapt BSESS curricula to align with industry standards.

**Sub-theme 1.2. Student learning and engagement.** This study examines the integration of curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities within the BSESS programs at BulSU and BPSU, focusing on their holistic approach to student development. Both institutions emphasize experiential learning, aligning academic goals with practical skills essential for professional readiness. Harve (2023) and Qitoras and Abuso (2021) highlight that such comprehensive curricula foster intellectual, social, and motor skills growth, equipping students for real-world applications.

Community engagement is central to both universities, with BulSU encouraging outreach and BPSU partnering with local schools to promote health. This practical alignment with community needs ensures relevance, as emphasized by Qitoras and Abuso (2021). Additionally, both institutions promote student autonomy and teamwork; BulSU involves students in event management, while BPSU prioritizes student-led projects, developing leadership skills as noted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2019).

Challenges exist, particularly regarding certification access, which BPSU addresses through structured pathways, highlighting differences in institutional approaches. To enhance BSESS program outcomes, both institutions should further integrate co-curricular activities with academic objectives, collaborate with community partners, and address logistical issues in resource availability, fostering engagement and ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for careers in exercise and sports science.

**Sub-theme 1.3. Assessment and evaluation.** This sub-theme explores assessment methods for student learning, skill development, and overall performance, which is essential for evaluating how well educational programs meet their objectives. Both BulSU and BPSU emphasize practical applications and community engagement in assessments to bridge theoretical knowledge with real-world skills, aligning with the findings of Joe Bandy (2011) on the benefits of community engagement for students' cognitive and social development.

BulSU highlights positive feedback from community partnerships, enhancing student engagement, while BPSU collaborates with community stakeholders, showing a commitment to supportive learning environments. Assessment methods include rubrics, performance tasks, situational exercises, and community feedback, which help cultivate leadership, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills. Both institutions focus on practical assessments, such as BPSU's specific skill evaluations in swimming and fitness.

Challenges persist, with BulSU managing an overloaded curriculum and resource limitations, while BPSU has improved engagement with a four-year program structure yet lacks advanced assessment tools. Performance-based assessments, like BulSU's CSER WEEK and BPSU's mini-Olympics, enable students to apply skills in realistic settings. Both institutions strive for inclusiveness in assessments, ensuring accessibility across diverse backgrounds. Continuous improvement in assessment practices remains a priority, with BulSU emphasizing reflection and BPSU focusing on feedback.

In conclusion, BulSU and BPSU demonstrate innovative, student-centered assessment strategies in their BSESS programs, preparing students for professional success. These findings underscore the value of varied assessments in aligning education with professional standards, offering insights for institutions aiming to refine their own assessment approaches.

## **Theme 2. Commitment of the program.**

It pertains to the commitment of the educational program in cultivating an adaptable and engaging learning atmosphere. The significance of various initiatives that contribute to program development is underscored, stressing the active participation of all stakeholders—students, educators, and the community—in this endeavor. The continuous improvements aimed at enhancing the quality and efficacy of the program reflect a collective aspiration for excellence.

**Sub-theme 2.1. Initiatives and Involvement.** The BSESS programs at BulSU and BPSU demonstrate proactive strategies in addressing specific educational needs, emphasizing stakeholder involvement, including educators, students, parents, and the community. Both institutions align with CHED's CMO No. 81, Series of 2017, advocating for responsive curricula that meet national and global health needs. This includes focused planning, stakeholder engagement, certification, skill development, and community integration.

BulSU and BPSU have tailored approaches: BulSU emphasizes research and extension services, while BPSU maintains sports initiatives to strengthen community engagement. Both encourage student involvement in academic and extracurricular activities, fostering student-centered learning. Community engagement is essential, as shown by BulSU's sports clinics and BPSU's local event participation, supported by partnerships with LGUs and organizations.

The focus on certifications enhances employability, with BulSU prioritizing coaching credentials and BPSU aligning qualifications with job market needs. Community sports initiatives and partnerships further contribute to student development, as noted in Willems et al. (2020) and partnerships with entities like IAPES, enhancing physical education's global best practices.

Greenwood et al. (2023) stress research-practitioner partnerships' role in generating impactful evidence, paralleled by BulSU's collaboration with international institutions and BPSU's local focus. Accreditation and curriculum reform ensure high standards and adaptability to local demands. Collaborative efforts with community stakeholders further enhance program relevance, with studies indicating positive outcomes for students engaged in service-learning projects.

Kapur (2023) underscores curriculum revision's role in promoting critical thinking, motivation, and alignment with global health priorities. Integrating feedback from students and stakeholders strengthens the curriculum's relevance and graduates' readiness for diverse roles.

**Sub-theme 2.2. Enhancement.** Enhancing educational programs involves revising curricula, upgrading facilities, and training faculty to provide quality education aligned with industry needs. Bulacan State University (BulSU) and Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU) both demonstrate commitment to improving programs through stakeholder engagement, curricular revisions, and holistic activities. BulSU includes input from students, parents, and industry, while BPSU collaborates with faculty and partners to align programs with industry demands.

BulSU's four-year curriculum balances academic rigor with social pressures, while BPSU's Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BSESS) curriculum emphasizes civil service exam preparation. The institutions' unique curricular approaches reflect distinct priorities.

BPSU highlights technology, particularly artificial intelligence in sports, while BulSU focuses more broadly on community needs. Both institutions implement feedback systems and outreach initiatives—

BulSU trains future swimming instructors, and BPSU's hybrid sports clinics link community service with professional training.

BPSU also emphasizes certifications to boost student employability, while BulSU incorporates co-curricular activities to enhance skills. Both universities prioritize holistic student development and community engagement through strategic planning, aligning with CMO No. 81, Series of 2017.

Rahman (2016) and Kutasi (2023) stress the value of feedback in student learning, and Miskell (2020) underscores the importance of strategic planning in aligning goals with student outcomes. Both BulSU and BPSU leverage collaborative, feedback-driven approaches to enhance educational quality and foster adaptability in exercise and sports science.

### **Theme 3. Lifewide learning experience.**

The study examines the integration of diverse real-world learning experiences beyond the classroom within the Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Sciences (BSESS) program. It addresses challenges such as the lack of recognition for non-academic experiences like internships and coaching, difficulties in balancing these with academic responsibilities, and unequal access due to financial or geographical constraints.

To address these concerns, strategies are proposed to formalize experiential learning through collaborations with industry partners and to acknowledge informal learning activities. Collaborations with sports organizations and opportunities for global exchanges are envisioned to enhance students' practical skills and overall development.

This theme encompasses three sub-themes: (1) Issues and Challenges; (2) Program Plans; and (3) Opportunities. These will detail how universities manage program-related challenges, their plans for students' futures, and potential opportunities available to graduates of the program.

**Sub-theme 3.1. Issues and challenges.** This examination analyzes the challenges educational institutions face in implementing effective life-wide learning within the Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BSESS) programs at Bulacan State University (BulSU) and Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU), guided by CMO No. 81, series of 2017. Both universities recognize Sports Science as an emerging field in the Philippines but face significant resource constraints. BulSU lacks updated fitness equipment and lab space, while BPSU needs basic facilities like pools and gyms. Studies (Fashina et al., 2018; Kela & Zulu, 2023) show that inadequate sports equipment and facilities hinder student engagement, academic performance, and physical development.

Logistical challenges, such as scheduling conflicts and limited partnerships for practical training, affect the learning experience. Community engagement is essential, as shown by De Weger et al. (2018) and Okyere (2024), who emphasize structured community-based learning (CBL) to enhance educational quality. Faculty qualifications also emerged as a concern, with many instructors lacking specialized sports science training, potentially impacting curriculum delivery (Nool et al., 2023; Dosaya et al., 2018). Financial constraints further limit practical training participation.

Studies (Ashraf et al., 2023; Khawar, 2021) reveal those financial barriers impact student engagement and academic success, underscoring the need for support systems. Graduates face employment challenges, stressing the importance of institutional support and industry alignment (Guo, 2023; Zhang, 2020). To address these challenges, both institutions need to invest in faculty development, update curricula with industry input, expand practical training, enhance physical resources, and strengthen community partnerships.

**Sub-theme 3.2. Program plans.** Bulacan State University (BulSU) and Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU) are advancing employability for graduates in their Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BSESS) programs through distinct, strategic approaches. Both institutions emphasize

practical experiences like internships and micro-credentials that align with industry demands. For BuLSU, this means cultivating a global outlook, with partnerships that offer international exposure, cross-cultural internships, and infrastructure investments to support hands-on learning. BPSU, conversely, prioritizes preparing students for local civil service roles and regional employment, enhancing its curriculum to meet local industry and governmental needs.

Rhinehart's (2022) insights on industry-academia partnerships are relevant here: BuLSU's international collaborations foster diverse skills for global employability, while BPSU strengthens local industry ties to align with civil service expectations. Each university's focus on tailored employability highlights a strong alignment with McAlpine's (2019) advocacy for Career Development Learning (CDL), preparing graduates for lifelong career adaptability and skill development.

Furthering this alignment, both universities incorporate holistic approaches to education by integrating extracurricular activities that foster soft skills like leadership and teamwork. As Rahman et al. (2021) suggest, technical skills are important, but interpersonal skills are critical in a skills-based economy. BuLSU and BPSU's structured extracurriculars encourage well-rounded development, echoing Kravchenko and Nygård's (2023) observations on social skill formation through student involvement.

BuLSU's infrastructure improvements, such as sports facilities, reflect a commitment to hands-on training environments, aligning with the Commission of Professors of Adult Education (CPAE) 2005 framework that recommends integrating co-curricular activities. Meanwhile, BPSU's focus on continuous curriculum review ensures educational content remains aligned with current market needs and up to date in competencies.

By embracing certifications and micro-credentials, both institutions boost graduates' marketability, responding to contemporary workforce demands. BuLSU's commitment to international opportunities contrasts with BPSU's local job-readiness focus, particularly in preparing students for civil service roles. Their distinct strategies ultimately contribute to well-prepared graduates equipped with both academic knowledge and practical experience, essential for adapting to local and global professional landscapes. As BuLSU and BPSU continue advancing, balancing local relevance with global competencies will be crucial for program sustainability and success in the field of exercise and sports science.

**Sub-theme 3.3. Opportunities.** Collaborating with sports organizations and community health initiatives gives students hands-on experiences that enhance employability. Global exchanges and networking expand perspectives and introduce diverse practices in exercise and sports science, equipping graduates with essential skills. Universities prioritize these opportunities to empower students to navigate the professional environment effectively.

Reischmann's (2019) concept of life-wide learning emphasizes learning across formal, non-formal, and informal settings—enhancing cognitive, social, and personal growth. Life-wide learning prepares individuals to adapt to complex, modern realities, contributing to both personal development and economic progress.

This study highlights that Bulacan State University (BuLSU) and Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU) reflect these life-wide learning principles in their Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BSESS) programs, aiming to improve employability through practical skills and globally recognized qualifications. BuLSU focuses on preparing students for international opportunities, recognizing the limited local job market for sports science graduates, while BPSU incorporates pathways to government service, addressing local employment challenges.

BuLSU emphasizes international partnerships and overseas training for global perspectives, while BPSU takes a more localized approach. Both universities encourage community engagement, allowing students to apply academic knowledge practically. BuLSU's planned sports facility and BPSU's local initiatives represent differing strategies in student preparation.



The relevance of this study lies in examining both institutions' integration of lifelong learning, practical experiences, and global perspectives. The research by Zhuang et al. (2017) supports these findings by revealing the interplay of various learning environments in enhancing educational outcomes. Ukko et al. (2022) also emphasizes the importance of certifications, which both universities recognize as vital for competitive job markets, particularly in fitness industries.

Ultimately, BuSU and BPSU both align with CMO No. 81, series of 2017, by prioritizing hands-on learning, community engagement, and qualifications to support student employability, adapting different strategies for holistic, career-focused education.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research sought to investigate the comprehensive learning curricula of the Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science (BSESS) Program within Region III, with an emphasis on increasing the relevance of the curriculum and enhancing graduates' employability. By conducting an in-depth examination of curricular objectives, content, pedagogical methods, assessment strategies, current policies, and encountered challenges, valuable insights have been gained concerning the effectiveness and flexibility of the BSESS programs at SU1 and SU2.

The BSESS programs at SU1 and SU2 aim to cultivate skills that ready graduates for careers in sports science. Their curricula are designed to impart both technical expertise and a sense of social responsibility, highlighting the importance of meaningful community engagement by graduates. The educational content offers a balanced combination of theoretical foundations and practical experiences. While SU1 emphasizes movement proficiency and experiential learning, SU2 focuses on fitness management simulations along with community outreach efforts this is highlighted with the SU2 "student extensionists". This variety in educational offerings demonstrates a commitment to equipping students with the necessary competencies for success in the dynamic field of sports science.

The teaching strategies adopted by SU1 and SU2 shows notable differences. SU1 prioritizes hands-on learning through active involvement in skill development, whereas SU2 combines technology with organized internship opportunities. This diversity in teaching methods reflects the institutions' adaptability to meet varied student requirements and prepare them for multiple career options.

Both universities emphasize performance-based evaluations to accurately assess student abilities. Nonetheless, SU2's integration of structured internships and certification programs ensures that its students not only gain knowledge but also become job-ready upon graduation. This focus on assessment is aligned with industry expectations, thereby improving the employability prospects of their graduates.

The results indicate that both SU1 and SU2 have structured their curricula in accordance with CHED Memorandum Order No. 81, thereby addressing both national and international educational requirements. This alignment fosters the creation of comprehensive learning programs that prioritize experiential learning and community involvement as essential elements of their educational approach.

Several key challenges have been highlighted in the study that could impede the effectiveness of the BSESS programs. Notably, there is a significant difference in curricular development strategies between SU1 and SU2. SU1's initiative to introduce new degree programs, such as a Bachelor of Science in Recreation and Park Management, demonstrates a proactive approach to addressing educational demands. Conversely, SU2's emphasis on refining its existing offerings may restrict its flexibility in responding to the rapidly evolving job market.

The strategies for community engagement also reveal differing philosophies. SU2 promotes student-centered initiatives like the "student extensionists" program, which encourages local participation and fosters social responsibility. In comparison, SU1 depends on formal partnerships, potentially leading to a less student-driven model of community involvement because they were hindered by the previous SU1 case when it comes to student engagement.

These variations could influence students' practical experiences and their readiness for professional roles. Furthermore, infrastructure development remains an issue; SU1 is making significant investments in improving its sports facilities, thereby enhancing the training environment for students. In contrast, SU2 has not reported similar developments, which might limit the quality of practical learning experiences available to its students. *Both institutions recognize challenges related to the local job market for sports science graduates; SU1 points out employment opportunities while SU2 highlights the adaptability of its curriculum.*

The comprehensive learning curricula of the BSESS programs offer numerous opportunities for improving student employability and educational results. Both institutions acknowledge the significance of incorporating practical training, community service, and experiential workshops to equip students for careers in sports management and coaching.

Developing cooperative partnerships with local government entities, sports organizations, and community health initiatives can further enhance students' educational experiences by providing practical applications of their studies. These collaborations are vital for boosting professional preparedness and ensuring that graduates can successfully navigate the complexities of the sports and fitness sector.

The research also indicates that incorporating micro-credentials and recognized qualifications into the curricula may increase students' marketability. This approach provides graduates with unique credentials that distinguish them in a competitive job market. Moreover, investments aimed at upgrading physical resources, such as training facilities, will foster optimal learning environments conducive to effective skill acquisition.

Additionally, a commitment to continuous adaptation—through regular assessments of labor market trends—will allow both universities to align their curricula with emerging opportunities and societal demands, ensuring that graduates are well-equipped for the changing landscape of the sports science arena.

This study emphasizes the importance of ongoing evaluation and adaptation of the BSESS curricula at SU1 and SU2. By addressing essential elements such as curricular intent, content, methodologies, assessment practices, and the implications of existing policies, this research contributes to the broader conversation on curriculum development and enhancement within exercise and sports science education. Future investigations should concentrate on assessing the long-term effects of these curricular modifications on graduate employability while exploring best practices for integrating community engagement and technological advancements into sports science programs. Such efforts can greatly enrich students' educational experiences and prepare them for fulfilling careers in the sports industry.

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