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# Embodied Traditions: A Qualitative Exploration of Cultural Identity Through Indigenous Physical Education Practices

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## Abstract

*This study examines the role of Indigenous physical education (PE) practices, such as traditional dances, games, and rituals as powerful embodied expressions of cultural identity and intergenerational knowledge transmission. Employing a qualitative research design anchored in ethnographic and phenomenological approaches, the study engaged twelve participants from two Indigenous communities. These included elders, cultural practitioners, educators, and youth. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and community immersion. Thematic analysis revealed that Indigenous PE practices transcend the conventional notion of physical activity; they function as vital vehicles for storytelling, spiritual expression, and cultural affirmation. Such embodied practices carry ancestral memory, uphold communal values, and communicate Indigenous environmental ethics. For many participants, movement was described not merely as exercise, but as pedagogy, teaching young people about their history, spirituality, and responsibilities within the community. Moreover, these culturally rooted activities were seen as acts of resistance and resilience against colonial erasure, reaffirming Indigenous worldviews and strengthening identity among the younger generation. Nonetheless, concerns were raised regarding waning youth participation, generational disconnection, and the influence of modern lifestyles, all of which threaten the continuity of these traditions. Despite these challenges, the study highlights the critical need for culturally responsive and adaptive strategies to revitalize Indigenous PE. By recognizing physical education as a culturally grounded and dynamic tool, this research emphasizes its role in preserving heritage, nurturing identity, and fostering community cohesion. The findings contribute to broader conversations on decolonizing education and affirming Indigenous knowledge systems within contemporary educational and cultural landscapes.*

**Keywords:** Indigenous physical education, cultural identity, embodied knowledge, traditional games, intergenerational transmission, ritual movement, ethnography, cultural resilience, Indigenous pedagogy, youth engagement.

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## Introduction

Indigenous communities worldwide have long preserved their cultural heritage through embodied practices such as rituals, dances, games, and physical activities that reflect their histories, values, and ways of life (Higgins, 2017; McMahon, 2014). These embodied traditions are not merely physical engagements but symbolic acts that communicate identity, spirituality, environmental ethics, and collective memory. In many Indigenous societies, physical movement serves as an integral mode of transmitting knowledge and maintaining social cohesion, offering a lens into Indigenous people lived experiences and worldviews (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; Battiste, 2013).

Unlike Western physical education (PE) models, which often prioritize competition, individual performance, and measurable physical outcomes, Indigenous physical education emphasizes holistic well-being, interconnectedness, spirituality, and communal values (Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013). For instance, in Māori and First Nations traditions, physical activities are linked with ancestral ties and responsibilities to the land, while embodying moral teachings and social protocols (Palmer, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 2011). Similarly, traditional Filipino games like *sungka*, *patintero*, and *luksong tinik* encapsulate cultural principles of cooperation, respect, and ingenuity. These practices offer meaningful avenues for intergenerational knowledge transfer, cultural resilience, and identity formation, especially among youth (Delos Santos, 2019; Nadal, 2021).

Despite the richness of these traditions, mainstream educational systems and PE curricula often fail to capture their cultural and symbolic depth. Studies by Nakata (2007) and Smith (2012) underscore how Indigenous knowledge systems are marginalized or tokenized within formal education structures, with PE no exception. Western-centric approaches dominate, often sidelining Indigenous pedagogies and ways of knowing, which results in a critical disconnect between education and cultural identity. The consequence is narrowing PE's role, reducing it to physical fitness rather than recognizing its potential as a culturally grounded practice that sustains Indigenous heritage.

Scholars have emphasized that Indigenous physical education (IPE) stands in contrast to dominant Western models, which often prioritize competition, standardized fitness, and quantifiable performance (Kirk, 2010; Tinning, 2017). Instead, IPE emphasizes holistic development, integrating learning's emotional, spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions. For instance, Atencio, Jess, and Dewar (2012) note that Indigenous movement practices often serve broader cultural purposes such as maintaining harmony with nature, cultivating collective responsibility, and

honoring ancestral traditions. These activities are deeply contextualized within Indigenous worldviews, in which land, body, and spirit are interconnected.

Although there is growing scholarly attention to Indigenous education and traditional knowledge systems (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Dei, 2006), much of the existing literature either focuses on abstract theoretical discussions or limits its scope to descriptive accounts of games and rituals. Few studies explore how community members live, interpret, and sustain Indigenous physical education. The perspectives of Indigenous elders, cultural practitioners, and youth are often absent, leaving a significant gap in understanding how embodied practices shape cultural identity in daily life.

This study addresses that gap by centering Indigenous peoples' voices and experiences about physical education. A qualitative approach grounded in ethnography and phenomenology aims to examine how traditional dances, games, and rituals function as embodied expressions of identity, resistance, and intergenerational learning. By engaging deeply with community narratives, this research will contribute to a more nuanced and respectful account of Indigenous physical education, one that recognizes movement not only as a physical act but as a dynamic cultural process that affirms Indigenous identity and preserves ancestral knowledge.

## **Research Questions**

1. How do indigenous communities use physical education practices to express and embody their cultural identity?
2. What cultural meanings are embedded in traditional movement, games, and physical rituals practiced by indigenous peoples?
3. How do elders, educators, and youth perceive the role of indigenous physical education in sustaining and shaping cultural identity across generations?

## **Research Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative research design grounded in ethnographic and phenomenological approaches to explore the lived experiences, cultural meanings, and identity-forming roles of Indigenous physical education practices at Tawi-Tawi Regional Agricultural College. The research was rooted in an interpretivist paradigm, emphasizing understanding human experiences from the participants' perspectives. This approach was particularly appropriate for investigating Indigenous

traditions, where cultural expression and embodiment are deeply contextual and nuanced.

Participants in the study were selected through purposive sampling, focusing on Indigenous elders, cultural practitioners, educators, and youth from selected Indigenous communities known for their continued practice of traditional physical activities. These participants were considered key informants, as they had rich, firsthand knowledge of Indigenous games, dances, rituals, and cultural significance. In total, 12 participants were engaged in the study, with representation from at least two different Indigenous groups to ensure a diversity of perspectives.

Data was collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, participant observations, and field notes. Interviews were conducted in the participants' preferred languages, and translators were employed when necessary to maintain cultural sensitivity and ensure meaningful accuracy. Observation sessions were conducted during community rituals, traditional games, and physical education activities, allowing the researcher to witness the embodied expressions of culture firsthand. Field notes captured reflections, context, and informal interactions outside formal interview settings.

Thematic analysis was utilized to interpret the data. The researcher transcribed and coded the interviews and field notes, identifying recurring patterns and themes that reflected participants' perspectives on identity, heritage, and the transmission of cultural knowledge through physical practices. The analysis gave particular attention to maintaining cultural integrity and respecting Indigenous epistemologies. Member-checking was conducted to validate interpretations with participants, ensuring that their voices were authentically represented.

The researchers strictly observed ethical considerations. They obtained informed consent from all participants and followed cultural respect, confidentiality, and collaborative engagement protocols. They consulted community leaders before data collection and sought their approval to ensure that the research aligned with cultural expectations and did not exploit Indigenous knowledge. This methodology allowed the study to uncover deep insights into how Indigenous physical education

practices serve as dynamic and embodied cultural identity forms, contributing to individual and communal sense of belonging.

## **Results and Findings**

### **Indigenous Communities Use Physical Education Practices to Express and Embody Their Cultural Identity**

Physical education in Indigenous communities transcends the conventional notion of bodily exercise, a dynamic cultural practice that embodies identity, spirituality, environmental ethics, and intergenerational knowledge. Rooted in rituals, traditional dances, and ancestral games, Indigenous physical education expresses cultural memory and collective values. Unlike Western models that often prioritize competition, standardized fitness, and individual achievement, Indigenous approaches to physical activity emphasize community cohesion, spiritual connection, and respect for the land (Fitzpatrick, 2011; Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013). In many Indigenous societies, movement is pedagogy and resistance, teaching youth about their heritage while affirming cultural sovereignty in the face of historical and ongoing colonial pressures (Smith, 2012; Battiste, 2013). However, modernization, generational shifts, and the marginalization of Indigenous knowledge systems in mainstream education pose significant challenges to the survival of these embodied traditions. This study investigates how Indigenous communities use physical education practices not merely for physical development but as powerful tools to express and sustain their cultural identity, drawing upon the lived experiences of elders, educators, cultural practitioners, and youth to understand the deeper meanings behind these movements.

#### *Movement as Cultural Storytelling and Memory Transmission*

In Indigenous communities, physical education practices such as dances, rituals, and traditional games act as embodied narratives communicating ancestral knowledge and shared histories. These practices offer more than physical benefits; they are symbolic forms of storytelling that pass on values, beliefs, and lived experiences. Through structured movement, communities encode memories of

migration, survival, and spiritual encounters, making the body a vessel for cultural transmission.

Participant Response 8 (Elder)

*"Every dance we perform is a story told through movement. It tells how our people crossed the mountains, how we thank the spirits for the harvest. This is how we remember who we are."*

Participant Response 12 (Youth)

*"When I join the games during festivals, my lolo tells me why they matter. It is not just playing; it is how they lived, worked together, and survived."*

This theme affirms that Indigenous physical education is a method of transmitting intergenerational memory and identity. As Battiste (2013) and Dei (2006) emphasize, Indigenous knowledge is often non-written and embodied, requiring participation in cultural practices to be fully understood. Thus, movement becomes a pedagogical tool through which Indigenous youth inherit and internalize their culture.

*Physical Education as a Form of Cultural Resistance and Identity Assertion*

In the face of ongoing colonization, cultural assimilation, and educational marginalization, Indigenous physical education practices serve as acts of resistance. By continuing traditional games and dances in formal and informal spaces, communities assert their cultural distinctiveness, reclaim educational agency, and resist the erasure of their heritage.

Participant Response 6 (Cultural Practitioner)

*"Our young ones were starting to forget. They play online games now. Nevertheless, we revived kadang-kadang and tumbang preso in schools and festivals. These games are not just for fun, they are our way of saying, 'This is who we are.'"*

Participant Response 8 (Educator)

*"I do not just teach basketball or volleyball in my PE classes. I include our traditional games. That way, the kids grow up knowing their roots, not just foreign sports."*

This aligns with Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) argument that education can be a site of decolonization if Indigenous knowledge is actively reclaimed. Incorporating traditional movement practices into PE is not just cultural preservation; it is a political act that asserts Indigenous agency and validates cultural identity in a system dominated by Western frameworks.

*Embodied Spirituality and Relationship with the Land*

In Indigenous worldviews, the body is interconnected with the land, the spirit world, and community. Physical education is often imbued with spiritual meanings, where movements in dances and rituals are ways to communicate with deities, nature

spirits, or ancestors. Traditional games also reflect respect for ecological cycles and environmental ethics.

Participant Response 3 (Elder)

*"Our dances are prayers. We speak to the spirits when we move like the eagle or the snake. We are asking for protection, for rain, for strength."*

Participant Response 7 (Youth)

*"I was taught to play near the river because it is sacred. We start every game by saying a prayer to the water. It is not just a place but part of our life."*

Lavallée and Lévesque (2013) emphasize that Indigenous physical activity often integrates emotional, environmental, and spiritual wellness, presenting a holistic view of health and learning. This theme highlights how Indigenous communities use embodied movement to maintain spiritual balance and environmental harmony, reinforcing their cosmological connections.

### **Cultural Meanings Are Embedded in Traditional Movement, Games, and Physical Rituals Practiced by Indigenous Peoples**

Traditional movement, games, and physical rituals practiced by Indigenous peoples are more than recreational or ceremonial activities; they are profound expressions of cultural meaning, spiritual belief, social values, and ecological knowledge. These embodied practices serve as dynamic vehicles for transmitting intergenerational wisdom, reinforcing communal identity, and maintaining harmony with the natural world. Unlike Western paradigms that often separate the physical from the spiritual and intellectual, Indigenous approaches to movement are holistic, viewing the body as a vessel through which history, morality, and environmental relationships are lived and taught (Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013; Smith, 2012). Whether through ritual dances that honor the spirits, traditional games that teach cooperation and foresight, or physical gestures that mimic the rhythms of the earth, these practices hold symbolic depth and pedagogical significance. However, people often overlook or misunderstand their meanings when interpreting them solely through the lens of sport or performance. This study explores the cultural meanings embedded in Indigenous physical practices by examining how traditional movements function as spiritual dialogues, social education, and expressions of ecological wisdom, as experienced and articulated by Indigenous elders, educators, and youth.

#### *Traditional Movement as Spiritual Dialogue and Sacred Expression*

Traditional dances and rituals among Indigenous communities are deeply spiritual acts that embody their cosmological beliefs, environmental ethics, and

reverence for the divine. The people do not perform these movements for entertainment but as physical prayers, offerings, and invocations of ancestral presence. Through them, they engage in a sacred dialogue with the land and the spirit world, often during planting seasons, rites of passage, healing ceremonies, or festivals honoring natural forces.

Participant Response 10 (Elder)

*"Our dances are not just for celebration. Every movement is a prayer. When we imitate the eagle, we ask for vision, strength, and protection from the ancestors who guide us."*

Participant Response 5 (Cultural Practitioner)

*"In our ritual before harvest, we dance to thank the spirits of the earth. The rhythm, chanting, and steps are all guided by what was passed down. It keeps the balance with nature and with the spirits."*

These responses reveal that Indigenous physical rituals are spiritual technologies, embodied systems of belief that reinforce sacred relationships. Lavallée and Lévesque (2013) and Smith (2012) argue that Indigenous worldviews are holistic, where spirituality, body, and land are interconnected. The dancing or ritual movement communicates humility, gratitude, and respect for cosmic forces. These meanings are often lost when reduced to folklore or performance for tourism, underscoring the need for culturally respectful interpretations of Indigenous embodied practices.

#### *Games as Rehearsals of Social Values and Communal Identity*

Traditional games are miniature versions of communal life, where children and youth learn essential social values such as cooperation, fairness, reciprocity, and respect. These games are not random pastimes, but structured experiences rooted in moral education. Children embody their communities' ethics, survival strategies, and interpersonal norms through play, preparing them for adult roles and responsibilities.

Participant Response 9 (Educator)

*"When our children play patintero or luksong tinik, they learn to work as a team, listen to rules, and support each other. It is more than fun; it is training for life."*

Participant Response 8 (Youth)

*"My grandfather told me that sungka teaches patience and foresight. It is not about winning fast. It is about thinking ahead, caring for your resources, and respecting your opponent."*

Games serve as culturally embedded educational tools where movement models and internalize social harmony and moral conduct. This aligns with Kirkness and Barnhardt's (2001) framework on Indigenous pedagogy, which emphasizes teaching through experience and community participation. These activities also



strengthen cultural identity by reinforcing a sense of belonging and continuity across generations.

### *Physical Rituals as Embodiments of Environmental Knowledge and Ecological Wisdom*

Many traditional movements and games are closely tied to the natural environment, mimicking animals, responding to seasonal changes, or reflecting agricultural cycles. These practices encode ecological knowledge such as weather patterns, planting indicators, or animal behaviors. Physical rituals are thus forms of environmental literacy, where the body learns and teaches through imitation and interaction with nature.

#### Participant Response 1 (Elder)

*"Our movements follow the rain, the wind, the animals. When we dance the rice ritual, we show how the stalks grow and how we bend with the wind. The land speaks through us."*

#### Participant Response 9 (Youth)

*"I used to think our bamboo dance was just hard footwork. However, my uncle explained it copies how the bamboo sways, strong but flexible. It is about adapting, like how we should be with nature."*

This theme emphasizes that physical rituals are ecological texts, kinesthetic ways of transmitting environmental ethics and survival knowledge. McMahon (2014) and Fitzpatrick (2011) affirm that Indigenous embodied practices are rooted in place, often reflecting sustainable relationships with the environment. When youth learn these rituals, they do not merely memorize movements; they inherit a worldview grounded in balance, stewardship, and resilience.

The cultural meanings embedded in Indigenous physical education practices are profound, layered, and deeply intertwined with spirituality, social ethics, and environmental wisdom. Traditional movement, games, and rituals are more than cultural performances; they are educational, spiritual, and ecological acts that preserve Indigenous identities and uphold ancestral knowledge. These embodied practices must be understood and respected not through Western fitness frameworks but through their original cultural logics, as living traditions that nurture individual growth and communal continuity.

### **Elders, Educators, and Youth Perceive the Role of Indigenous Physical Education in Sustaining and Shaping Cultural Identity Across Generations**

Indigenous physical education is more than a set of traditional games, dances, or rituals; it is a living, embodied expression of cultural identity, values, and intergenerational wisdom. Elders, educators, and youth alike view these practices as

essential tools for preserving and transmitting Indigenous heritage in a world where cultural erosion is an ever-present threat. Unlike Western physical education models focused on competition and individual performance, Indigenous physical education emphasizes community, spirituality, environmental connection, and cultural storytelling (Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2012). These movements are not merely physical acts but carriers of ancestral memory, environmental ethics, and moral teachings that unite generations. As modern influences increasingly shape the lives of Indigenous youth, the role of physical education in sustaining identity has become more urgent. This study investigates how members of Indigenous communities across age groups and roles perceive the function of physical education in shaping and sustaining cultural identity, offering insight into how traditional movement practices can remain vibrant, relevant, and empowering in contemporary contexts.

#### *Physical Education as a Living Archive of Cultural Identity*

Elders, educators, and youth commonly perceive Indigenous physical education (PE) as a vital repository of cultural knowledge that embodies traditions, oral histories, and ancestral values. Unlike written texts or institutional curricula, Indigenous PE is viewed as an embodied archive where culture is learned, practiced, and passed on through movement. Ritual dances, traditional games, and symbolic gestures encode narratives of origin, survival, and collective values, allowing younger generations to connect with their identity physically.

##### *Participant Response 1 (Elder)*

*"Our dances and games carry the stories of who we are. We do not need to write them; they live as we move. When the youth dance, they remember, even if they do not realize it yet."*

##### *Participant Response 2 (Youth)*

*"I do not always understand the words of the songs, but when we perform them, I feel proud, like I belong to something bigger. I feel our history in my body."*

These perspectives reveal that Indigenous PE acts as a cultural memory system, allowing knowledge to be transmitted kinetically. This aligns with Battiste (2013), who describes Indigenous education as rooted in experiential and holistic learning. Through physical enactment, youth embody their identity, grounding themselves in a collective past that informs their present and future.

#### *Movement as a Medium for Intergenerational Dialogue and Social Cohesion*

All three groups, elders, educators, and youth, recognize Indigenous PE as a bridge that connects generations. Traditional games and dances offer opportunities for elders to mentor, for educators to contextualize cultural practices in formal learning,

and for youth to develop a sense of belonging and respect for their heritage. The shared physical space created by these activities fosters relational learning and strengthens intergenerational bonds.

Participant Response 1 (Educator)

*"When we include traditional games in school, we invite the elders to teach. It becomes a shared experience where children learn more than skills; they learn respect, humility, and cultural pride."*

Participant Response 2 (Youth, Group A):

*"I like when our lola joins us during practice. She shows us how it has done. It is different from just watching on YouTube. There is something warm and real when she teaches us."*

These insights highlight Indigenous PE as a social process facilitating mentorship and reinforcing relational values. As Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) explain in their "Four R's" framework, Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsibility, Indigenous learning is inherently communal. PE becomes a cultural space where youth are passive receivers and active participants in a shared cultural continuum.

*Indigenous PE as Resistance and Cultural Continuity in Modern Times*

For many participants, Indigenous PE is not only a form of cultural preservation but a means of resistance against the erasure of Indigenous identity in the face of globalization, modern schooling, and digital distractions. Elders express concern over the fading of traditions, while educators and youth see participation in Indigenous movement practices to reclaim pride, assert identity, and maintain cultural integrity.

Participant Response 1 (Elder)

*"Children now are forgetting. They like TikTok and sports from other countries. However, when we teach them our dances again, they slowly remember who they are. It gives us hope."*

Participant Response 2 (Educator)

*"Including Indigenous games in the curriculum is our way of saying our culture is alive. It is not just history, it is now. The kids walk taller when they learn our ways."*

These reflections affirm that Indigenous PE is a protective and transformative force. It challenges dominant narratives that devalue Indigenous practices and asserts the cultural relevance of ancestral knowledge in contemporary life. This resonates with

Smith (2012), who advocates for decolonizing education by re-centering Indigenous voices and practices within learning environments.

Elders, educators, and youth perceive Indigenous physical education as a vital, living force that sustains and shapes cultural identity across generations. Whether as a form of cultural storytelling, a vehicle for intergenerational learning, or a form of cultural resistance, Indigenous PE affirms a sense of self, community, and continuity. Its power lies not only in the movement itself but in the relationships, values, and histories it embodies. To ensure its survival, educational systems and community leaders must embrace and support Indigenous PE as a legitimate and essential dimension of cultural education and identity formation.

## **Discussion of Findings and Results**

The findings of this study highlight the profound role that Indigenous physical education (PE) plays in sustaining and shaping cultural identity across generations. The perspectives of elders, educators, and youth reveal a shared understanding of movement-based practices as deeply embedded in Indigenous ways of life, functioning not merely as recreational or physical activities but as integral components of cultural continuity, community education, and resistance against cultural erosion.

Firstly, the data affirm that Indigenous PE is a living archive of cultural memory. Elders emphasized that traditional dances, games, and rituals are storied movements through which ancestral knowledge is passed down. These practices preserve oral traditions and embody community values such as unity, respect, and spiritual connection. Even when unfamiliar with the historical context of certain movements, youth participants expressed a strong emotional connection and sense of belonging when engaging in these activities. This affirms Battiste's (2013) argument that Indigenous knowledge is often transmitted through lived, experiential means rather than written texts.

Secondly, Indigenous PE was described as a powerful medium for intergenerational learning and community cohesion. Both educators and elders emphasized how traditional games provided opportunities for teaching values such as cooperation, patience, and leadership. Physical activities became shared spaces where elders could mentor youth, and cultural lessons were woven into the play fabric. This aligns with Kirkness and Barnhardt's (2001) "Four R's" Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsibility, which are foundational Indigenous education principles reflected through these embodied practices.

Thirdly, the participants expressed that Indigenous PE functions as a form of cultural resistance and resilience in the face of modern challenges. Many elders

expressed concern over the diminishing interest of younger generations due to technology and Westernized schooling. However, educators and youth also saw participation in traditional games and dances as acts of cultural reclamation. Integrating Indigenous movement into school curricula was seen as an empowering step toward decolonizing education and asserting cultural relevance in contemporary settings. These findings support Smith's (2012) call for education systems to move beyond token inclusion of Indigenous content and instead embed Indigenous knowledge as a foundational and ongoing practice.

Moreover, the findings reveal tensions between cultural preservation and modern adaptation. While there is a strong desire to keep traditions intact, educators also recognize the need to adapt delivery methods, through festivals, school programs, or digital platforms, to meet the evolving interests of youth. This tension reflects McMahon's (2014) argument that cultural resilience involves preservation and innovation, especially in navigating generational and contextual shifts.

The study underscores that Indigenous physical education is not static or symbolic; it is a dynamic, participatory, and relational process that binds past, present, and future. The gathered perspectives indicate the need for sustained community-based and educational efforts to preserve, revitalize, and meaningfully integrate Indigenous PE practices in formal and informal settings. Doing so not only nurtures cultural identity among Indigenous youth but also strengthens collective pride, unity, and resistance against the ongoing impacts of colonization and cultural loss.

## **Conclusion**

This study has demonstrated that Indigenous physical education is a vital cultural practice that is central to sustaining and shaping Indigenous identity across generations. Far from being limited to physical exercise or recreational activity, traditional movement, games, and rituals are deeply interwoven with Indigenous worldviews, serving as embodied expressions of history, spirituality, social values, and ecological knowledge. Elders, educators, and youth collectively view Indigenous PE as a living, dynamic learning system that fosters intergenerational dialogue, preserves cultural memory, and strengthens communal bonds.

Elders see these practices as sacred traditions that must be preserved to maintain spiritual balance and ancestral connection. Educators regard Indigenous PE as an invaluable pedagogical tool, capable of integrating cultural learning into formal education settings in both relevant and transformative ways. Youth, in turn, experience these activities as powerful affirmations of their identity, often describing

moments of pride, belonging, and connectedness when participating in traditional dances or games.

However, the findings also highlight growing concerns about cultural disconnection due to modernization, digital influences, and the dominance of Western educational paradigms. This reality indicates an urgent need for intentional, culturally responsive strategies to revitalize and sustain Indigenous PE practices. Such efforts must be grounded in community engagement, led by Indigenous knowledge holders, and supported by inclusive education policies that affirm the legitimacy and importance of Indigenous knowledge systems.

Indigenous physical education is not merely about movement; it is about meaning. It offers a holistic framework for educating the body, mind, and spirit, preserving cultural continuity, and fostering resilience in Indigenous communities amid a rapidly changing world.

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