

BUILDING SKILLS AND BONDS: YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON THE PABALHAS TRAINING PROGRAM IN BARANGAY SAN MIGUELAY STA FE LEYTE

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of youth participants in the PABALHAS Training Program held in Barangay San Miguelay, Sta. Fe, Leyte, focusing on its impact on their physical fitness, sports skill and sense of community. Using a phenomenological research design, the study aimed to understand how the program influenced physical fitness, skills acquisition in basketball and volleyball, community spirit and teamwork. The primary data were collected through interviews with 10 participants, with data saturation reached at the eighth respondent. The findings revealed seven emerging themes, including the positive influence of peer motivation on physical activity, the role of exercise in enhancing sports performance and the acquisition of basketball and volleyball skills that fostered participants' self-confidence. Additionally, the program cultivated a sense of community through shared activities and team sports, creating unity and reinforcing teamwork. However, challenges like inconsistent attendance due to school obligations, limited resources, and an uncovered training venue posed barriers to skill acquisition and training continuity. Addressing these obstacles through flexible scheduling, resource allocation, and improved facilities could have enhanced participant engagement and the program's overall effectiveness. Verbatim transcriptions validated by participants were used to ensure the accuracy of the findings. This study highlighted the PABALHAS Program's role in promoting physical fitness and community values among youth, underscoring the potential benefits of similar initiatives for holistic youth development.

Keywords: Pabalhas program, extension, youth fitness, development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Barangay San Miguelay, Santa Fe, Leyte is a dynamic community characterized by strong interpersonal connections among its residents. However, children within this community have limited opportunities to participate in physical activities, which contributes to sedentary lifestyles (Ostermeier, Gilliland, Irwin, Seabrook, & Tucker, 2024). Such inactivity is concerning, as it can lead to serious health issues, including obesity and cardiovascular disease. Moreover, without access to structured sports programs, young individuals are deprived of the opportunity to cultivate essential skills such as teamwork, discipline and leadership qualities that are crucial for their personal development and future success (Danilo, Pino, & Martínez-Patiño, 2023).

More so, through regular training sessions, the program seeks to not only improve physical health but also to instill a sense of confidence and belonging within the community. Likewise, by mastering the fundamentals of basketball and volleyball, participants will acquire the strength and skills necessary for success both on the court and beyond.

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Furthermore, the extension program is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment that promotes teamwork and social interaction. Beni, Fletcher, and Ní Chróinín, (2017) participation in sports inherently encourages camaraderie, enabling youth to forge meaningful friendships and learn the importance of collaboration. Through group training and friendly competitions, participants will enhance their communication skills and understand the value of cooperation (Meibert et al., 2020). On the same note, these experiences are critical, as they prepare youth not only for athletic pursuits but also for the various challenges they may encounter in academic and daily life.

Hence, promoting sports programs in the Philippines is anchored on key laws such as the Republic Act No. 6847, which established the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) and mandates the state to foster sports development, particularly among the youth. The Republic Act No. 9164, or the National Youth Commission Act, also emphasizes sports as a key component of holistic youth development. Additionally, the Philippine Constitution, in Article II, Section 15, underscores the state's duty to protect and promote the right to health of its people, which includes encouraging physical activities. Despite these legal frameworks, however, there remains a significant gap in the implementation of sports programs, especially in rural barangays like San Miguelay.

Ultimately, the intervention program transcends mere athletic training as it represents a vital investment in the future of the youth in Barangay San Miguelay. Hence, by offering structured activities that promotes healthier lifestyles and strengthen the community. On the foregoing note of Richards, Sheldrick, Swindell, Barker, Hudson, and Stratton (2023) as young people become more active and engaged, they will contribute positively to their surroundings, fostering a culture of health, teamwork and mutual support. Through this extension, the proponents aspire to create a more connected, empowered and vibrant youth community in Santa Fe, Leyte one that will pave the way for a brighter future for all.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Subjects

In this study, a diverse range of participants was carefully selected to provide insights into the PABALHAS Program in Brgy. San Miguelay, Sta. Fe, Leyte. Ten youth participants aged 10-16 were recruited to share their experiences related to personal growth, skill development in basketball and volleyball and overall physical fitness. This group included a mix of genders, socio-economic backgrounds, and varying levels of program experience. Additionally, 2-3 community leaders, such as local government officials and youth advocates, were interviewed to evaluate the program's alignment with community needs. Coaches and facilitators involved in the program also contributed their perspectives, with about three selected for interviews to provide valuable feedback on participant progress and program structure. Recruitment occurred through community meetings and direct outreach via program coordinators, with informed consent obtained from all participants and parental consent for youth.

2.3 Tools

The research instrument used for the study involves several key steps. Firstly, clearly define the research objectives, focusing on youth participants' experiences and perceptions, as well as the program's impact on personal growth and social competencies. Secondly, conduct a literature review to identify existing validated instruments related to youth development and sports programs. Afterwards, crafting the instrument which were tailored interview guides and focus group questions that seek feedback from experts in qualitative research to refine the instrument, then revise the instrument to enhance effectiveness; and finally, validate the instrument by assessing content validity through expert reviews and testing construct validity via thematic analysis, ensuring it accurately captures the intended data (Gill, & Baillie, 2018).

2.4 Data Acquisition

To gather qualitative data, the program engaged young participants in interviews, conducted with parental consent, allowing them to share their experiences and insights about their participation. This engagement not only provided valuable feedback on their development of foundational skills in basketball and volleyball but also highlighted how the program promoted physical fitness and healthy habits. Through structured training and friendly competition, participants discussed how these experiences enhanced their teamwork, discipline, and social interaction skills. Involving community leaders and parents was essential to enriching the program's qualitative data collection. Community leaders contributed insights into the specific needs and interests of the youth, ensuring that the program remained relevant and engaging. Parents supported their children's participation and provided a positive home environment, which was crucial for the program's success. Conducting one-on-one and in-depth interviews with both parents and community leaders served as vital sources of qualitative data, revealing their perspectives on the program's impact and the overall community response. This approach ensured that the feedback collected was comprehensive and reflective of the broader community context. Lastly, coaches and facilitators played a key role in the qualitative data-gathering process by providing ongoing feedback on participants' progress during training sessions. Their insights were essential for shaping future sessions and adapting the program to meet the youth's evolving needs. This qualitative feedback loop allowed for tailored coaching strategies and contributed to creating an environment where every participant could thrive. By combining feedback from youth, parents, community leaders, and coaches, the PABALHAS Program developed a holistic approach to youth development, leveraging community strengths to uplift the next generation.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis plan for the extension conducted began with the collection of qualitative data through interviews and focus groups involving youth participants, parents, community leaders, and coaches (Flick, 2013). All sessions were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy in capturing insights and experiences. Hence, the analysis employed a thematic coding approach, developing an initial coding framework based on the research questions, which could be refined as needed (Naeem et al., 2023). Afterwards, transcripts were systematically coded to identify key themes and patterns related to personal growth, skill development, community support, and program effectiveness. More so, the identified themes were interpreted in the context of existing literature on youth development, leading to actionable recommendations for program improvements. The results were presented in a comprehensive report that included direct quotes to illustrate key points, and preliminary findings were shared with participants and stakeholders for feedback to validate interpretations. This iterative process ensured that the final report accurately reflected the experiences and perspectives of all involved, ultimately supporting effective youth development within the community.

3. RESULTS

This chapter contained the narrative accounts of the data gathered. It included the seven themes that emerged from the responses. The vital goal of this study was to vividly capture the experiences of the participants in the PABALHAS Program conducted.

The pre-identified research informants were 10 youth participants in the extension conducted. Data saturation was reached on the 8th interviewee. The data obtained were based on the analysis of the narrative accounts and responses of the 10 youth participants. The verbatim transcriptions of the narrative accounts were transcribed and shown to the participants as part of the member in-checking of all the information they have provided

which shall be reflected and presented honestly. This was done solely to ensure the validity of the results.

They were labeled as PPYF 1 or Pabalhas Program Youth Fitness 1 to 10 in the results presentation. Hence, the translations for these were in parenthesis and italicized. The researcher's comments and quotes from participants' responses were presented as proof.

PABALHAS Training Influence the Physical Fitness Levels of Youth

In this context, the PABALHAS Training Program encourages youth to be physically active by fostering motivation through group participation, and thus, observing others engaged in sports and exercise inspires individuals to improve their own fitness and skills through regular practice and workouts contribute to better performance and overall health.

Theme 1 Peer Influence on Physical Activity

Peer influence plays a significant role in shaping youth participation in physical activities. The encouragement and example set by peers inspire individuals to engage in sports, exercise regularly, and improve their overall fitness levels (Butler & Strand, 2021). Thus, this shared motivation creates a positive environment that promotes consistent physical activity.

The following are some of the participants' experiences:

"Kun nakakakita kami hin nagmumulay hinin ngs sports naiimplwensiyahan gihapon kami kay tungod nga marisyo man". [When we see others being active in sports, we also get influenced because it's really enjoyable] -**PPYF 1**

"Kun nakakita kami hin nagmumulat, nabulig kami kay para an amon lawas permi praktisado". [When we see others practicing or playing, it inspires us to also play so that we can maintain our own physical activity.] -**PPYF 3**

"Kun nakakita kami hin mga nagmumulay na-impluwensyahan gihap kami pagmulay mahitungod nga marisyo ngan nakapabalhas gihap". [When we see others working out, it motivates us to exercise too because it is good for us and helps us stay active]. -**PPYF 5**

Truly, peer influence is a powerful motivator in encouraging youth to participate in physical activities and when young individuals observe their peers actively engaged in sports or exercise, they are often inspired to follow suit (Laursen and Veenstra, 2021). Seeing friends or teammates practice, work out, or compete fosters a sense of camaraderie and motivation, pushing others to also engage in physical activities to stay active and fit as this social dynamic not only promotes participation but also helps create a positive atmosphere where physical activity becomes a shared experience, encouraging consistency and commitment.

On the same note, peer influence extends beyond mere participation, it can impact the intensity and dedication with which individuals approach their physical fitness goals. This collective motivation amplifies individual efforts, making physical activity more enjoyable and sustainable, while reinforcing the importance of maintaining an active lifestyle through continuous peer support.

Theme 2 Exercise's Role in Enhancing Sports Performance

Exercise is fundamental to enhancing sports performance, enabling athletes to build strength, endurance, agility, and flexibility that is an essential element for success in any sport (Suchomel et al., 2016). Beyond physical conditioning, regular exercise supports skill refinement, mental focus, and injury prevention, allowing athletes to perform consistently at their peak such as tailored exercise programs that align with individual performance goals highlight the powerful impact of exercise on sports success.

The following are some of the participants' experiences:

"Pag-exercise han lawas labi na an pag-iban han timbang para mabug-atan pag dalagan". [Regular exercise, particularly efforts to lose weight, plays a significant role in improving running performance and overall physical fitness]. -**PPYF 2**

“Pagpractice kada adlaw han Basketball kay maaram naman ako magmi=ulay tungod han mga ginhatag nga training nira Sir”. [Practicing basketball every day helps me improve my skills because of the training provided by the coaches]. **-PPYF4**
“Tungod kay maaram naman ako pagmulay han Volleyball, gin-aaply ko hiya permi kun mayda murumlay ngan ginbabalhas gihap ako ngan naibanan an akon mga fats”. [Since I already know how to play volleyball, I always apply it whenever there’s an opportunity, and I also work out, which helps me reduce my body fat]. **-PPYF 8**

Exercise is foundational to sports performance as it enhances physical attributes like strength, endurance, speed and flexibility that are essential in competitive environments. Through consistent training, athletes condition their bodies, improve motor skills, and lower injury risk by strengthening muscles and stabilizing joints (Wang et al., 2023). Hence, this physical preparation enables athletes to perform at higher levels with reduced susceptibility to common sports-related injuries, allowing for sustained participation and progress.

More so, exercise plays a critical role in mental conditioning, building focus, resilience, and confidence needed during high-pressure situations and the discipline of following a structured routine fosters determination and reinforces a growth mindset, equipping athletes to tackle challenges both on and off the field (Belcher et al., 2020). Together, these physical and mental benefits underscore exercise as a crucial element in achieving and maintaining peak sports performance.

Participants Acquire in Basketball and Volleyball Through the Program

In this context, the theme highlighted the transformative power of learning and skill development, emphasizing how education and training can build confidence, improve performance and foster personal growth in any area of life. Through dedicated effort and support, individuals can overcome challenges, acquire new abilities and ultimately enjoy the rewards of their hard work and perseverance.

Theme 3 Community Hoops Skills

Through accessible training programs, individuals of all ages have the opportunity to learn essential basketball fundamentals, such as passing, shooting and dribbling, which not only enhance their physical fitness but also build confidence and teamwork. These initiatives encourage participation in local leagues and create a sense of belonging among community members, promoting social interaction and collaboration (Schiavo, 2021).

The following are some of the participants' experiences:

“Nahibaro kami han warm-up exercises before main activity and cool-down exercises after han training aside han basic skills (dribbling, passing, shooting)”. [The importance of warm-up exercises before the main activity and cool-down exercises after training, aside from the basic skills (dribbling, passing, shooting)]. **-PPYF 7**

“Han una nga diri pagud ak maaram mag Basketabl nahadlok ak oagbulig ha mga liga ha brgy, pero yana nga maaram naak han shooting, passing ngan dribbling nag-gigiyan nala ako pagmulay han Basketball ngan tungod han basketball Ngan volleyball nahirayo Hira han mga vices sugad han paninigarilyo ngan iba pa”. [Before, when I didn’t know how to play basketball, I was afraid to join the leagues in the barangay. But now that I know shooting, passing, and dribbling, I am gradually getting into playing basketball. Because of basketball and volleyball, they are also staying away from vices like smoking and others]. **-PPYF 6**

“Nabaro gihapon kam han history, facilities, equipment, basic rules, hand signals and terminologies han basketball and volleyball tungod han ira programa ngan ginbuhat dinhi haamon brgy”. [[We also learned about the history, facilities, equipment, basic rules, hand signals, and terminologies of basketball and volleyball because of their program conducted here in our barangay]. **-PPYF 4**

Truly, accessible basketball training programs offer individuals of all ages the chance to learn essential skills like passing, shooting and dribbling. With this program as it will not only enhance physical fitness but also foster confidence and teamwork. As participants become more proficient, they experience a sense of accomplishment that motivates further development, particularly benefiting younger players who thrive in structured learning environments (Merbert et al., 2020).

Additionally, these initiatives encourage community members to join local basketball leagues, promoting social interaction and a sense of belonging as the players connect through shared training and competition, they strengthen community ties and foster an inclusive atmosphere. This combination of skill development and social engagement creates a vibrant community united by a passion for basketball, enhancing both individual growth and collective camaraderie (Iwasaki, 2015).

Theme 4 Building Volleyball Competence

Volleyball is truly a dynamic game that requires a combination of physical attributes, including strength, agility, coordination and communication as each skill plays a critical role in contributing to the team's effectiveness, and mastering these techniques lays the foundation for more advanced strategies and game play. Through consistent practice, athletes can improve their individual abilities, leading to greater confidence on the court (Puentes, 2024).

The following are some of the participants' experiences:

"Dako hin duro an naibulig hinin nga ira programa haamon kay maaram naak yana han mga rules han Volleyball like han rotation, pag set ngan pag spike ngan na-aapply ko na hiya ha amon pagmumulay-mulay". [This program has greatly helped me because I now understand the rules of volleyball, such as rotation, setting, and spiking, and I can apply them when we play]. **-PPYF 1**

"Maupay ko inin nga ira program nga gindara nganhi haamon brgy kay damo it akon nasabtan parti Volleyball, nakakamulay naako ngan maaram naak hit positioning ngan paagiging active". [I really appreciate this program they brought to our barangay because I learned a lot about volleyball. I can now play and understand positioning and how to stay active]. **-PPYF 5**

"Pinaagi hinin nga ira program mas nagging active naako pagmulay han Volleyball kay medyo maaram naak han skills ngan rules". [Through this program, I have become more active in playing volleyball because I now have a better understanding of the skills and rules]. **-PPYF 3**

Solely, training programs that incorporate game simulations and situational drills help sports enthusiasts apply their skills in real-game scenarios, enhancing their situational awareness and strategic thinking. This not only improves individual performance but also fosters better teamwork, as players learn to communicate effectively and work together to execute plays (Johnson, 2021). And so, by integrating both technical and tactical training, athletes become more well-rounded and capable of contributing to their team's success.

Furthermore, building volleyball competence encourages a growth mindset among players by emphasizing the importance of continuous learning and improvement helps athletes embrace challenges and view setbacks as opportunities for growth. Hence, coaches play a pivotal role in this process by providing constructive feedback, setting achievable goals, and encouraging perseverance as players witness their progress and gain mastery over various skills, their confidence grows, motivating them to push their limits further (Gillham & Mullem, 2020).

Program Influence Participants' Sense of Community and Teamwork

In this context, the program fosters a strong sense of community and teamwork by bringing participants together to learn, practice, and support one another. Through shared goals and

group training, players build trust, communication and collaboration skills, creating lasting bonds. This collective effort unites individuals, promoting an inclusive, supportive environment centered on shared growth and teamwork.

Theme 5 Unity Through Community Sports

Community sports bring together individuals of diverse backgrounds by allowing them to connect through a common goal. Hence, these activities break down social barriers, encourage collaboration, and provide a space where individuals can feel included and valued (Pineda, 2024). By engaging in regular practices and games, participants build trust and camaraderie, transforming sports from a simple pastime into a powerful tool for social cohesion.

The following are some of the participants' experiences:

“Nagkamay-ada kami hin team work ngan nagbuburbilig kami kun mayda mga naruyag pagmulay gin lilimpyuhan nam an amon murulayan gihapon katima tam mulay”. [We have teamwork, and we help each other when there are those who want to play; we also take care of our court to keep it clean for everyone]. **-PPYF 2**

“Nagkaka-urusa kami ngan damo na it amon mga sangkay tungod hinin nga program ni Sir Roncal, marisyo ngan damo tam nahibarua-an sugad nala han team work, cooperation ngan unity”. [We come together and have many friends because of this program by Sir Roncal; we are united and have learned a lot about teamwork, cooperation, and unity]. **-PPYF 4**

“Nadisiplina kami kay kun mayda schedule han training diri kami naabsent kay tungod nga makarawod han mga coaches and trainors. Sugad gihap an amon pag urusa nga mga youth kun mayda mulay sanglit nakadaug-daug na kami kun mayda mga invites or tune up haamon”. [We have become disciplined because when there is a training schedule, we do not skip it due to the expectations of the coaches and trainers. Likewise, our unity as youth has improved, so we have been able to win when we receive invitations or tune-up games]. **-PPYF 6**

Additionally, community sports promote teamwork and cooperation, skills essential for unity both on and off the field. In team sports, players learn to communicate effectively, support one another, and work together to achieve shared objectives, reinforcing the value of collective effort (Harris, 2024). This experience translates into broader life contexts, as individuals carry the lessons of teamwork into their personal and professional lives, fostering unity in various community settings.

Furthermore, community sports inspire pride and shared identity among participants, reinforcing a unified spirit within the community. When individuals take part in local sports events, they are not only representing themselves but also their neighborhood or town, which builds a strong community identity. Celebrating each other's successes and overcoming challenges together brings people closer and promotes a sense of shared achievement.

Challenges Encountered while Implementing the Training Session

In the context of the study, various challenges were encountered in implementing the training sessions, largely due to conflicting schedules and environmental factors. Since most participants are students, their availability is limited by school commitments, with many unable to attend regularly due to differing free times or fatigue from classes. This inconsistency has left some participants behind in learning the skills introduced.

Theme 6 Barriers to Skill Acquisition

Barriers to skill acquisition can arise from a range of factors, including inconsistent participation, limited resources, and personal challenges (Jackson, 2015). Irregular attendance

due to conflicting responsibilities can lead to gaps in learning, while inadequate training facilities and resources disrupt the continuity and quality of skill development.

The following are some of the participants' experiences:

“Kay tungod nga kaurugan han mga participants hinin nga program mga estudyante, kaurugan diri kami na complete kay mayda mga klase tapos diri paprehas ana mon vacant time kay an iba kapoy naman ha eskwelahan”. [Because most of the participants in this program are students, we often can't complete it since there are classes, and not everyone has the same free time; some are already tired from school].

-PPYF 5

“An amon schedule diri kami danay natitirok, asya an iba nababaya han skills ngan igin introduce kay diri man naka attend”. [Our schedule doesn't always align, which is why some are left behind in learning the skills introduced since they can't attend].

-PPYF 4

“Mayda mga times nga diri ako naka attend kay nadudugangan han sugo haakon ni Mama ngan Papa asya dana yak nuurhi han skills nga igin tutdo pero ginhahabol ko kun naka-attend ako”. [There are times when I can't attend because my parents give me extra chores, so I end up missing the skills being taught. However, I try to catch up whenever I do attend]. **-PPYF 8**

Inconsistent participation is a significant barrier to skill acquisition, as regular practice and instruction are essential for developing proficiency in any skill. It is sad to note that when participants cannot attend sessions consistently due to scheduling conflicts or external obligations, they miss critical learning opportunities, creating gaps in their development (Williams, & Hodges, 2023). This can lead to frustration, as those who fall behind may struggle to catch up with their peers and the lack of continuity in practice makes it difficult to reinforce new techniques, slowing overall progress and limiting the effectiveness of the training.

More so, resource limitations also play a crucial role in impeding skill acquisition. Access to proper equipment and suitable training environments is necessary for meaningful practice and learning (Sharma, & Holton, 2023). Without these, participants are unable to engage fully in exercises that are critical to mastering new skills.

Theme 7 Uncovered Venue Challenges

The inconsistency in practice time not only slows skill development but also demotivates participants who are eager to learn (Merbah, & Meulemans, 2011). Hence, the lack of protection from the weather creates an unpredictable training environment, making it difficult to maintain regular attendance and a steady learning progression.

The following are some of the participants' experiences:

“An weather, kay kun mapapaso diri kami nakag padayon han amon training kay waray man atop an amon venue asya diri kami nakakag padayon kay mapapaso man”. [The weather is a problem because when it gets too hot, we can't continue our training since our venue has no roof, so we can't proceed when it's scorching]. **-PPYF3**

“Pag mauran, nasasayang an amon oras kay diri kami nakakag training”. [When it rains, our time is wasted because we can't train]. **-PPYF 6**

“Waray kasi atop an amon venue han training asya kun nauran or masisirak, diri kami nakakapag-padayon han amon training ngan saying la an amon oras”. [Our training venue has no roof, so when it rains or gets too hot, we can't continue our training, and our time is wasted]. **-PPYF 2**

Participants may struggle to concentrate on drills or exercises under such conditions, as the physical toll of the heat limits their endurance and enthusiasm. This not only diminishes the quality of the training but also reduces the participants' ability to engage fully with the learning process.

Further, the lack of a roof or covered space also affects the overall experience and sense of commitment among participants. When training sessions are constantly interrupted or canceled due to unfavorable weather conditions, it becomes challenging to maintain momentum and progress (Lagmay, & Rodrigo, 2020). Thus, inconsistency affects both individual skill development and team dynamics, as players miss valuable practice time that could help them grow and collaborate more effectively.

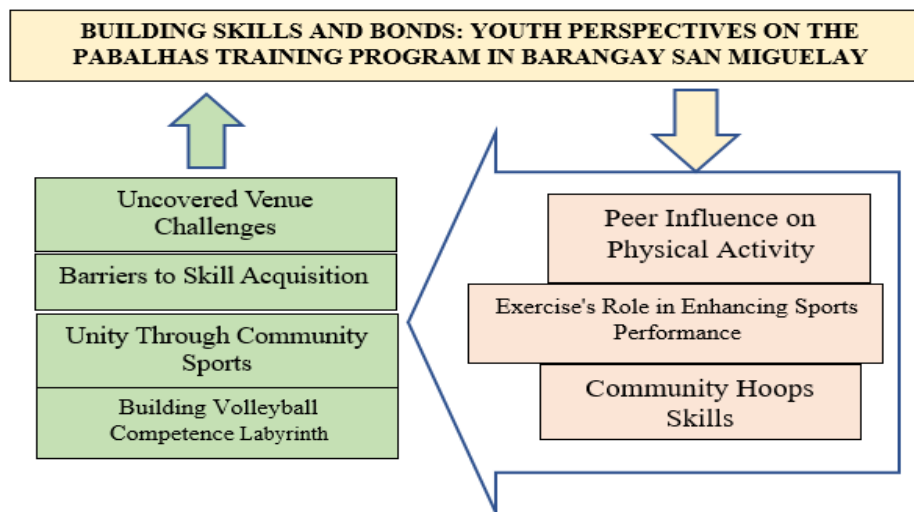


Figure 1: Thematic Map

4. DISCUSSION

The Pabalhas Training Program in Barangay San Miguelay offers a unique opportunity for youth to develop both practical skills and meaningful relationships within their community. From the youth's perspective, the program not only equips them with valuable skills for personal and professional growth but also fosters a sense of camaraderie and teamwork. Through the training, participants engage in hands-on activities that enhance their abilities while simultaneously strengthening bonds with peers and mentors. The collective experience encourages a deeper sense of belonging and social responsibility, empowering young individuals to become more active contributors to their community. Ultimately, the program serves as a vital platform for youth to develop resilience, confidence, and leadership qualities that will benefit them long into the future.

5. CONCLUSION

The following are the conclusions drawn from the significant findings of the study:

- The PABALHAS Training Program successfully promoted youth participation in physical activities, significantly enhancing their fitness levels. Peer influence played a crucial role, as participants motivated each other and fostered a supportive environment that encouraged active engagement in sports.
- The program emphasized skill acquisition in basketball and volleyball, leading to noticeable improvements in participants' athletic abilities. Structured training and tailored exercises equipped them with the strength and agility needed to perform better, highlighting the importance of consistent practice for success.
- The program also fostered a strong sense of community and teamwork among participants. Shared training experiences helped break down social barriers, cultivate cooperation, and instill a sense of belonging, transforming sports into a powerful tool for personal growth and social cohesion.

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