

Perceptions of physical education implementation in Namibia within African and global contexts: A scoping review

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Abstract

Physical Education (PE) is widely recognised as a fundamental component of holistic education and a human right embedded in international and national policy frameworks. Despite strong policy commitments at global, regional, and national levels, the implementation of PE continues to face systemic and perceptual challenges. In this paper, the researchers present a scoping review of the stakeholder perceptions on the implementation of PE in Namibia within the broad African and global contexts. Guided by Arksey and O'Malley's six-stage framework, this scoping review utilised leading international and regional journals indexed in reputable academic databases, including Google Scholar, EBSCO, SABINET, ERIC, Scopus, and Web of Science. The review indicated a consistent pattern: although teachers, learners, and policymakers recognise the educational, health, and social value of PE, its implementation remains constrained by a shortage of qualified personnel, limited resources, weak monitoring mechanisms, and its low academic status. Despite global efforts such as UNESCO's *Quality Physical Education framework*, gaps persist in empirical evidence on policy enactment and stakeholder alignment. Thus, the study recommends that stakeholders such as teachers should be provided with sufficient training and clear guidelines on the implementation of PE. The study further recommends that the coordination and implementation of PE policies and activities should be informed by best practices being implemented in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

Keywords: physical education, perceptions, global, implementation, scoping review

Introduction

The researchers begin this paper by providing a brief overview of the education reforms in Namibia, particularly as it relates to the teaching of Physical Education (PE). Physical Education in Namibia has a significant history that predates the country's independence, with early forms of physical activity introduced for leisure and community well-being (Kela et al., 2023). Following independence in 1990, the education system underwent a major reform aimed at promoting equity and quality for all learners. Education in the new independent Namibia is regarded as the engine to develop individual levels in terms of physical, social and cognitive abilities (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2016). While PE was retained in the curriculum, it was designated as a non-promotional subject making it officially part of the school curriculum from junior primary to senior secondary phases, with a standard allocation of one 40-minute period per week (Ngolo, 2024). The Education Act of 2020 in Namibia, along with international declarations like UNESCO's International Charter of Physical Education and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,

collectively establish a policy framework that supports Physical Education in Namibia. While the Education Act of 2020 promotes the holistic development of learners through participation in physical activities and sports, the international declarations recognise PE as a fundamental human right (Republic of Namibia, 2020; UNESCO, 2015a). Additionally, the African Union supports this by using sports as a tool for sustainable development, while collaborative national initiatives like the Integrated Physical Education and School Sport (IPESS) Programme and policies on inclusive education further ensure that PE is a central, well-supported, and accessible component of the Namibian education system (African Union, 2016-2025; Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture & Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service, 2023).

It is worth noting that education systems globally are grounded in the recognition of education as a fundamental human right, as articulated in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Assembly, 1948). Within this rights-based framework, Physical Education is

increasingly positioned not merely as a complementary subject but as an essential component of holistic education, that promotes physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development (Cale, 2023). International policy instruments such as UNESCO's *International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport* and the *Quality Physical Education (QPE) Guidelines for Policymakers* affirm that access to quality PE is a fundamental entitlement of all learners, linking it directly to health, wellbeing, inclusion, and lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2015a, 2015b). Globally, governments have embedded PE within national curricula as part of broader commitments to public health, sustainable development, and child rights.

The alignment of PE with the World Health Organization's holistic definition of health (World Health Organization, 1948) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 and SDG 4 (Arora & Mishra, 2019), reflects an international consensus that education must extend beyond academic attainment to include physical literacy and active citizenship. At the same time, global monitoring initiatives such as the Global Observatory for Physical Education (GoPE!) highlight persistent gaps between policy intention and school-level implementation (Martins et al., 2025). Across Africa, similar policy commitments exist, yet scholarship consistently reports tensions between policy aspiration and classroom practice (Daniel et al., 2022; Seibu et al., 2024). Teachers frequently acknowledge the developmental and health benefits of PE, but implementation is often constrained by shortages of trained personnel, limited infrastructure, insufficient instructional time, and the marginalisation of PE as a non-examination subject (Daniel et al., 2022; Gouws et al., 2020; Seibu et al., 2024).

These structural and perceptual challenges shape how PE is prioritised within schools and how learners experience the subject. Within this broader continental and global landscape, Namibia reflects both shared and context-specific dynamics. National policies affirm holistic education and inclusive development (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2016; Republic of Namibia, 2020), and recent reforms demonstrate institutional commitment to strengthening PE provision (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2019; Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture & Ministry of

Sport, Youth and National Service, 2023). However, empirical studies indicate ongoing challenges related to teacher preparedness, resource allocation, monitoring, and perceptions of PE's academic status (Kela et al., 2023; Nauyoma et al., 2024). Given the above, the researchers used a desktop review to assess the stakeholders' perceptions on the implementation of the Physical Education in Namibia within the broader African and global contexts.

Methodology

The researchers adopted a scoping review to examine literature on the stakeholders' perceptions on the implementation of Physical Education in Namibia, situated within African and global contexts. A scoping review generally follows a structured process to examine a broad research question related to a given topic (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Khalil et al., 2021). Arksey and O'Malley (2005) outlined a six-stage framework for carrying out scoping reviews. These stages comprise the following: (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying studies, (3) criteria for selecting studies, (4) charting the data, (5) collating, summarizing and reporting results, and (6) consultation with stakeholders. In this study, the researchers followed only the first five stages, as the sixth stage of the framework is optional and was therefore not applied. The way how these stages were implemented are described.

Research questions

The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What are stakeholders' perceptions of the implementation of Physical Education in Namibia?
2. How do stakeholders perceive the implementation of Physical Education within African and global contexts?

Identifying studies

Peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, and international frameworks were considered for review. The researchers' review was drawn from leading international and regional journals including but not limited to: *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*; *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*; *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*; *Journal of Physical Education*,

Recreation and Dance; BMC Public Health; Frontiers in Sports and Active Living; Journal of Physical Activity and Health; Advances in Physical Education; Creative Education; Preventive Medicine Reports and regional education journals such as the Namibia Educational Reform Forum Journal. Policy documents from UNESCO and the United Nations were also consulted.

Criteria for selecting studies

The researchers limited their search strategy to these journals because they are indexed in reputable academic databases such as Google Scholar, EBSCO, SABINET, ERIC, Scopus and Web of Science and further, the University of Namibia's subscriptions to the databases make it easier to access them. Priority was also given to literature published within the last decade to ensure contemporary relevance, while foundational policy texts were included to establish normative grounding. Furthermore, articles published in languages other than English, French, or Spanish were not considered. In addition, although a scoping review allows broad conceptual integration, it is limited by the fact that the researchers only drew from the secondary data. About fifty-eight articles met the criteria for inclusion.

Charting the data

The researchers' first step in charting the data involved assessing the appropriateness of the title and abstract. The researchers then categorised each article or report according to its degree of relevance, findings, geographical or continental context, key concepts and terminologies employed, citation, and date of publication. All this information was systematically recorded in a tabular format in Microsoft Excel. However, if a journal article was not readily accessible but could potentially be obtained through the researchers' university library, the researchers contacted the library to request access and documented this process accordingly in their records.

Collating, summarising and reporting results

In the final stage, the researchers conducted a thematic analysis of the review findings, coding and categorizing stakeholders' perceptions regarding the implementation of PE in Namibia within the broader African and global context.

Findings

Thematic synthesis

Stakeholders' perceptions of PE implementation in the Namibian context

In Namibia, Physical Education is intended to promote movement competence, physical fitness, emotional stability, social responsibility and healthy lifestyles among learners, aligning with broader global health promotion and educational development agendas (Kela, 2023). Despite these policy intentions, the success of PE implementation largely depends on school-level implementers whose perceptions influence whether the subject is prioritised or marginalised within everyday school practice. Evidence indicates that secondary school teachers in Namibia generally hold positive perceptions of PE, recognising its contribution to learners' cognitive, social, physical and emotional development as well as its role in fostering lifelong health behaviours (Nauyoma et al., 2024). As the primary implementers of the curriculum, teachers represent the most influential stakeholders in determining how PE is enacted in schools.

Many express strong support for the inclusion of PE within the secondary school curriculum, even during challenging periods such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and advocate for improved support systems, the appointment of qualified teachers, and stronger integration of PE with other subject areas (Nauyoma et al., 2024). However, these positive attitudes coexist with a clear awareness of substantial implementation challenges. Teachers acknowledge that PE is often poorly implemented due to the shortage of qualified instructors (Nauyoma et al., 2024). A minority of educators even propose reducing or removing PE from the curriculum, largely because it is perceived as a non-examinable subject that receives limited emphasis from the Ministry of Education (Nauyoma et al., 2024; Kela et al., 2023). Consequently, PE is frequently viewed as having low educational status, with some educators undervaluing its importance, leading to reduced instructional time and curricula that fail to address diverse learner interests (Nauyoma et al., 2024; Taukeni & Rembe, 2015).

Weak monitoring and supervision by regional education offices further reinforce perceptions that the subject is not taken seriously within the education system (Kela, 2016). Research conducted in Lüderitz

secondary schools similarly highlights structural barriers shaping teacher perceptions and practices. These include insufficient resources, limited professional training, and unclear instructional guidance, all of which contribute to reduced teacher confidence and inconsistent curriculum delivery (Ngolo, 2024). Such constraints illustrate how systemic conditions influence not only implementation but also stakeholders' beliefs about the feasibility and value of PE. Learners constitute another critical stakeholder group influencing the sustainability of PE. Studies involving senior secondary learners in the Zambezi Region show that students generally hold positive attitudes toward participating in PE but simultaneously recognise systemic limitations such as inadequate facilities and irregular teaching (Kela, 2016). Learners report that shortages of equipment and qualified teachers reduce meaningful engagement, negatively affecting motivation and perceptions of the subject's value. These experiences create a reinforcing cycle in which weak implementation contributes to declining learner interest, which in turn strengthens perceptions that PE is less important than academic subjects.

Learner perceptions also reveal nuanced differences. Although PE participation is offered without formal gender discrimination, evidence suggests that boys tend to express more negative attitudes toward the subject than girls. Additionally, learners often perceive the curriculum as uninteresting, a factor associated with the subject's low status within schools (Kela et al., 2023). Overall, these findings point to a clear disconnect between the widely acknowledged benefits of PE and its actual standing and delivery in Namibian secondary schools, shaped by both positive aspirations and persistent structural frustrations among teachers and learners (Taukeni, 2016). Stakeholder perceptions must further be understood within the broader policy environment. Research examining the implementation of Namibia's National School Health Policy indicates that stakeholders frequently encounter policy–practice gaps resulting from unclear coordination mechanisms, limited training opportunities, and insufficient institutional support (Katangolo-Nakashwa & Mfidi, 2025). Although this research is not exclusively focused on PE, it remains highly relevant because PE forms a central component of

school health promotion initiatives. While stakeholders generally support policy goals, limited operational capacity constrains effective implementation, thereby reinforcing ongoing inconsistencies in PE delivery across schools.

Stakeholders' perceptions of PE implementation in the African context

Across Africa, teachers' perceptions of Physical Education implementation broadly reflect patterns observed in Namibia, characterised by strong recognition of the subject's developmental value alongside persistent concerns regarding its marginalised status within school systems. Teachers widely acknowledge the physical, social, and emotional benefits of PE and view it as essential for promoting holistic learner development and lifelong participation in physical activity (Seibu et al., 2024; Daniel et al., 2024). Consequently, PE is commonly regarded as an important component of a balanced and comprehensive curriculum, even in contexts where implementation remains inconsistent (Daniel et al., 2022).

In South Africa, teachers' perceptions of PE are shaped by complex systemic and historical factors. Many educators, particularly those without specialised training, report feeling inadequately prepared and lacking confidence to deliver the PE curriculum effectively (Kahts-Kramer et al., 2022). PE is frequently perceived as having lower status compared to academically examined subjects such as Mathematics and Science, resulting in reduced instructional time or the reallocation of PE periods to other subjects (Du Toit et al., 2007). Teachers also identify practical challenges including inadequate facilities, insufficient equipment, and large class sizes as major barriers to quality instruction (Swanepoel & Roux, 2024). A further concern relates to the structure of the Life Orientation subject, where many teachers responsible for PE lack formal PE qualifications, contributing to declining learner participation (Williams, 2025). These perceptions are deeply connected to the historical marginalisation of PE following post-apartheid curriculum reforms, which reshaped subject priorities within the education system (Van Deventer, 2012).

Similar perceptions emerge in Zimbabwe, where teachers frequently regard PE as a non-examinable subject, reinforcing its low status and allowing academic subjects to take

precedence. Limited financial investment in facilities and equipment further strengthens this perception, while inadequate access to syllabi and teaching materials leaves some teachers feeling ill-equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively (Gouws et al., 2020). As a result, implementation challenges are interpreted not only as resource limitations but also as indicators of institutional undervaluation. In Ghana, research reveals a comparable tension between recognising the value of PE and struggling to implement it consistently. Teachers identify barriers such as inadequate professional training, limited expertise, competing accountability demands, and at times weak professional commitment to PE instruction (Donkor, 2021).

Higher perceived barriers are associated with reduced frequency of PE lessons, demonstrating how perceptions directly influence classroom practice. Although teachers generally express positive attitudes toward PE, implementation is often undermined by practical constraints, leading to situations where the subject is either poorly taught or not taught at all (Seibu et al., 2024). Limited specialised training also contributes to misunderstandings of PE programmes and terminology, which can shape negative interpretations of the subject's relevance (Daniel et al., 2022). Despite these challenges, teachers frequently express a desire for improved training opportunities, better facilities, and reduced curriculum congestion as pathways toward strengthening PE delivery (Seibu et al., 2024). Further evidence from Nigeria indicates that both principals and teachers perceive significant barriers to promoting physical activity within schools, including declining numbers of trained PE teachers, limited access to continuing professional development, and low institutional prioritisation of physical health education (Oluwasanu et al., 2021).

Similarly, Kenyan research highlights the central role of teacher preparation and school capacity in shaping stakeholder perceptions. Teachers who perceive themselves as undertrained or unsupported are more likely to report weak implementation and lower instructional quality. In a study conducted in Nyamira South Sub-County, teacher training was directly associated with the effectiveness of PE instruction, reinforcing the importance of professional readiness as a determinant of implementation success (Onyancha et al.,

2018). Evidence from Uganda also reflects this broader continental pattern. While stakeholders generally demonstrate positive attitudes toward PE, practical constraints such as limited resources and insufficient institutional support contribute to perceptions of weak implementation (Musumba, 2022). In Botswana, teacher perceptions have been examined through the lens of professional identity and development, revealing that unequal access to training, resources, and professional recognition influences how teachers perceive their legitimacy as PE professionals. When professional development opportunities are perceived as inadequate or marginal, teachers struggle to sustain quality teaching practices, thereby weakening implementation outcomes (Shehu, 2009).

Overall, the African literature demonstrates a consistent pattern in which stakeholders value Physical Education conceptually but experience substantial structural and institutional barriers that shape perceptions of limited feasibility. Across diverse national contexts, implementation challenges are closely linked to teacher preparation, subject status, resource availability, and professional recognition. These shared experiences suggest that perceptions of PE implementation across Africa are less a reflection of resistance to the subject itself and more an outcome of systemic conditions that constrain its effective implementation within schools.

Stakeholders' perceptions of PE implementation across global contexts

Globally, stakeholder perceptions of Physical Education policy implementation are complex, reflecting diverse educational contexts and varying degrees of success in integrating PE effectively. There is broad consensus that PE is essential for promoting lifelong physical activity and fostering a health-promoting lifestyle (Cale, 2021; Cale et al., 2019; Goss et al., 2022). Yet, alongside this agreement, practical challenges and nuanced perceptions emerge among different stakeholder groups. Teachers' perspectives worldwide frequently emphasize the role of PE in developing physical fitness, cognitive skills, and emotional well-being (Daniel et al., 2022). They recognize that a well-structured PE curriculum contributes significantly to overall student development. However, teachers often perceive PE as under-prioritized within the

broader curriculum, sometimes viewed more as a break from academic subjects rather than a subject requiring deliberate learning (Lyngstad et al., 2019; Redelius et al., 2015, as cited in Goss et al., 2022). This perception can create a gap between policy objectives and actual classroom practices. Moreover, factors such as curriculum understanding, availability of resources, and the evolving demands of the job market further shape teachers' views on PE implementation (Seibu et al., 2024). In the United States, stakeholder perceptions often hinge on whether PE is treated as a core academic discipline or merely as a compliance requirement. When PE is relegated to timetable filler or supervisory duties, expectations shift toward minimal instructional engagement rather than educational depth. Research highlights that community assumptions about the professional role of PE teachers significantly influence programme delivery and school-level implementation (Tsuk et al., 2026).

Canadian studies reveal a related pattern, particularly in elementary schools where generalist teachers predominate (de Guise et al., 2024). While teachers and pre-service educators acknowledge PE's importance, many anticipate challenges in classroom management, learner motivation, inclusive participation, and assessing physical learning outcomes. These concerns often stem from insufficient professional preparation and limited mentoring opportunities (Kell, 2017). As a result, although stakeholders value PE, its implementation is frequently cautious or inconsistent, despite ideological support for the subject (de Guise et al., 2024).

In England and across the United Kingdom, stakeholder perceptions are strongly influenced by accountability systems that prioritize examinable subjects. While policies promote high-quality PE and recognize its contribution to learner development, teachers and school leaders often align institutional priorities with assessment-driven demands (Hemingway et al., 2026). Consequently, PE can assume a lower curricular status even when stakeholders agree on its benefits. Additionally, PE specialists report that primary-level PE is inconsistently delivered due to reliance on generalist teachers with limited training and restricted instructional time (Rainer & Jarvis, 2021). A similar trend appears in Ireland, where stakeholders support PE in principle but encounter a mismatch

between policy intent and professional capacity (Kinchin et al., 2012). Teachers frequently report challenges related to confidence, time constraints, access to facilities, and professional learning opportunities. When educators feel unprepared for planning and assessment, PE delivery often shifts toward minimal compliance or outsourcing. Limited professional readiness thus directly influences the consistency and quality of implementation (Kinchin et al., 2012).

Australian research further illustrates that strong curriculum intentions alone do not guarantee effective implementation (Essiet et al., 2024). Stakeholder perceptions are heavily influenced by school leadership, teacher capability, and competing curriculum priorities. Principals play a decisive role in resource allocation, staffing decisions, and institutional recognition of Health and Physical Education programmes, effectively acting as gatekeepers of implementation quality (Lynch, 2015). Emerging pedagogical frameworks, such as physical literacy, introduce new expectations for PE teaching; however, uneven understanding of these concepts and variation in teacher preparation contribute to fragmented practices across schools (Essiet et al., 2024).

Similarly, in Aotearoa New Zealand, teachers value PE but perceive it as vulnerable within increasingly crowded curricula. Pressures from literacy and numeracy demands, additional school activities, and limited specialist support often displace PE from regular instructional practice (Gordon et al., 2016; Dyson et al., 2018). Teachers' perceptions frequently revolve around time constraints, confidence concerns, and challenges in delivering coherent programmes rather than isolated physical activities (Gordon et al., 2016; Dyson et al., 2018). Learner perspectives further shape these perceptions; when lessons are repetitive or overly sport-focused, students may participate without meaningful engagement, which in turn affects teachers' beliefs about the educational impact and priority of PE (Carlson, 1998).

Norwegian studies on school-based physical activity initiatives indicate that teachers had generally positive attitudes toward promoting movement (Lomsdal et al., 2022). Yet, teachers often cite academic pressure and limited professional competence as barriers to sustained implementation. Even when educators align with the health rationale

behind PE initiatives, perceptions of insufficient expertise and competing responsibilities determine whether programmes are embedded or gradually diminish after initial adoption (Lomsdal et al., 2022). In Spain, stakeholder perceptions frequently emphasize inclusion, participation, and social diversity within PE contexts (Marconnot et al., 2021). Teachers describe challenges beyond instructional practice, including linguistic differences, cultural expectations, and social integration, which affect learner engagement (Marconnot et al., 2021). Research also underscores the importance of whole-school collaboration, with successful PE implementation perceived as dependent on shared institutional responsibility rather than isolated efforts within PE departments (Alcántara-Porcuna et al., 2022). Globally, learners' perceptions of PE are mixed, reflecting both positive and negative experiences. Many learners view PE as an opportunity to engage in physical activity and learn to lead healthy lifestyles through enjoyable and meaningful experiences (Asiimwe et al., 2021). Factors contributing to positive experiences include mastery of activities, social engagement with peers, and teacher facilitation. Learners acknowledge the crucial role of teachers in shaping enjoyment and future participation in physical activity (Martins et al., 2025). Negative perceptions often arise from excessive structure, social comparison, and performance pressure. When PE emphasizes competition over enjoyment, learners may feel stressed, embarrassed, or judged. Additionally, PE's "non-exam" status sometimes leads learners to perceive it as less academically relevant (Goss et al., 2022).

Beyond teachers and learners, other stakeholders including academics, practitioners, and policymakers recognize the value of concepts like physical literacy as guiding frameworks for quality PE (Duncan et al., 2024; Goss et al., 2022). However, misconceptions persist regarding definitions and practical applications. Stakeholders generally agree that assessment is important but report variability in practice, with assessment often not prioritized in schools. A shared understanding of PE among all stakeholders is widely recognized as essential for designing effective interventions, curricula, and policy initiatives (Duncan et al., 2024).

Gaps in the existing literature

Although existing literature provides valuable insight into stakeholders' perceptions of Physical Education (PE), several critical areas remain insufficiently explored in ways that could meaningfully strengthen implementation. Much of the current research focuses on identifying challenges rather than generating empirically grounded strategies for improving PE practice within schools. Consequently, while the literature offers strong diagnostic understanding across Namibian, African, and global contexts, it provides limited guidance on practical solutions capable of transforming policy intentions into sustained classroom practice. Across these contexts, studies consistently identify barriers such as shortages of trained teachers, limited resources, and the low curricular status of PE. However, there remains limited investigation into which interventions effectively improve implementation outcomes. Namibian studies highlight inadequate teacher preparation and weak implementation structures (Nauyoma et al., 2024; Ngolo, 2024), while African research similarly identifies insufficient professional training as a central constraint (Donkor, 2021; Onyancha et al., 2018). Global literature echoes these concerns, noting persistent teacher confidence gaps and uneven professional readiness, particularly among generalist teachers responsible for PE delivery (de Guise et al., 2024; Kell, 2017). Despite this recurring evidence, few studies empirically evaluate intervention programmes, mentoring systems, or professional learning models that demonstrably improve teacher competence or learner outcomes in PE.

Furthermore, although school leadership plays a decisive role in curriculum prioritisation, timetabling, supervision, and resource allocation, the operational practices through which leaders support PE implementation remain under examined. Research in Namibia identifies weak monitoring and low institutional prioritisation (Kela, 2016; Kela et al., 2023), while African scholarship similarly documents the marginalisation of PE within schools (Oluwasanu et al., 2021; Kahts-Kramer et al., 2022). Global studies reinforce this pattern, showing that leadership decisions strongly influence whether PE is treated as a core learning area or a peripheral activity (Lynch, 2015; UK Department for Education, 2022). However, the literature rarely investigates

leadership models, accountability structures, or organisational practices that successfully elevate PE status and sustain implementation over time. In addition, the literature frequently highlights policy–practice gaps, particularly within Namibia’s school health policy framework (Katangolo-Nakashwa & Mfidi, 2025). Yet research seldom explains how policy intentions translate into everyday pedagogical practices at school level. Global scholarship similarly identifies persistent disconnections between policy aspirations and classroom realities (Goss et al., 2022), despite strong policy rhetoric supporting PE. What remains unclear across contexts are the implementation mechanisms, communication pathways, and support structures that enable policies to function effectively within schools.

The shortage of qualified PE teachers is another widely documented concern across Namibia and Africa (Nauyoma et al., 2024; Musumba, 2022; Donkor, 2021). However, the literature provides limited examination of sustainable professional development models capable of supporting generalist teachers who frequently deliver PE. While global research acknowledges the need for improved teacher preparation and conceptual clarity around emerging frameworks such as physical literacy (Duncan et al., 2024), most studies remain descriptive rather than evaluative. Even work addressing professional identity and teacher experiences (Shehu, 2009) tends to document challenges without testing structured development frameworks that strengthen instructional practice longitudinally. Moreover, PE marginalisation is repeatedly linked to its classification as a non-examinable subject (Nauyoma et al., 2024; Gouws et al., 2020).

Despite widespread recognition of this issue, few studies examine assessment reforms capable of enhancing the academic legitimacy of PE. Global literature similarly highlights uncertainty and variability in assessment practices, with stakeholders often lacking shared understanding of how learning in PE should be evaluated (Duncan et al., 2024; Goss et al., 2022). The absence of research on competency-based assessment, formative evaluation systems, or integration of PE outcomes into broader accountability frameworks represents a significant gap limiting implementation improvement. Another global gap concerns learner-centred curriculum innovation. While studies internationally acknowledge that learner

engagement strongly shapes perceptions of PE, research shows that programmes perceived as repetitive, overly sport-focused, or disconnected from meaningful learning reduce motivation and participation (Carlson, 1998; Martins et al., 2025). However, there is limited investigation into curriculum redesign processes that incorporate learner voice or culturally responsive pedagogies capable of improving engagement and sustaining participation, particularly in diverse educational contexts. Finally, much of the literature examines stakeholder groups in isolation, focusing primarily on teachers or learners. There is limited research exploring how collaboration among multiple stakeholders including school leaders, parents, communities, health sectors, and policymakers can collectively strengthen PE implementation. Although broader policy studies involve diverse actors (Katangolo-Nakashwa & Mfidi, 2025), PE-specific collaborative implementation models remain largely absent. Global research increasingly emphasises whole school and whole-community approaches to physical activity promotion (Alcántara-Porcuna et al., 2022), yet empirical evidence demonstrating how such collaboration improves PE implementation remains scarce.

Conclusion

The literature review on perceptions of Physical Education implementation in Namibia, within African and global contexts reveals a complex perceptions and challenges across Namibia, Africa, and the global arena. The perceptions regarding PE implementation play a vital role in the implementation of PE. In Namibia and across Africa, while teachers generally hold positive views on PE's importance for holistic development, these are often tempered by frustrations over a lack of resources, insufficient training, and the subject's low academic status. Learners, too, show mixed perceptions, valuing the fun and social aspects but often deterred by competitive pressures or a perceived lack of academic rigor. Globally, the recognition of PE's holistic benefits and the concept of physical literacy are strong, yet practical implementation is hampered by varying understandings among stakeholders and persistent challenges in resource allocation and policy enforcement.

Recommendations

The study recommends that stakeholders such as teachers should be provided with sufficient training on the implementation of the PE policy. Those who are involved in the coordination of PE activities should provide clear guidelines on the implementation of PE. Finally, the coordination and implementation of PE policies and activities should be informed by best practices being implemented in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

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