



Meta-review of Physical Education's role in enhancing social welfare and equity among Indonesian youth

Meta-revisión del papel de la Educación Física en la mejora del bienestar social y la equidad entre los jóvenes indonesios

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Abstract

Introduction: The Indonesian young must be prepared to contribute to the promotion of social welfare, equity and fairness, but this preparation requires Physical Education (PE), as a whole child development beyond classroom confines, and is consistent with UNESCO's 4th goal of Sustainable Development.

Objective: The aim of this paper is to consider the transformative potential of PE in relation to social inclusion, emotional health, and equity for all young people, particularly for those from marginalised groups.

Methodology: A scoping review method was used to systematically search literature emanating from several reputable sources such as peer-reviewed journals and reports of reputable organizations such as the UNESCO and WHO highlighting the impact of PE on social equity and welfare of young people.

Discussion: The results show that inclusive PE activities can promote the development of shared goals, resilience, and emotional intelligence. Yet, gender gaps and social constraints in the accessibility prevent girls from attending and, children from the vulnerable communities are left behind. To reverse this trend, we work at community level and use gender-sensitive teaching methodologies.

Conclusion: PE is identified as an important agent for social transformation and youth empowerment in Indonesia in the meta-review. Rising to systemic challenges through inclusive curricula, teacher preparation, and equitable resource provision and access will help all youth to avail themselves of the benefits of physical activity, promoting a more equitable society.

Keywords

Equity; Physical Education; social welfare; youth empowerment.

Resumen

Introducción: La Educación Física (EF) es esencial para promover el bienestar social y la equidad entre los jóvenes indonesios, apoyando el desarrollo holístico más allá de los objetivos académicos y alineándose con el Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 4 de la UNESCO. 4. **Objetivo:** Este estudio tiene como objetivo explorar el potencial transformador de la educación física (EF) en la mejora de la inclusión social, el bienestar emocional y las oportunidades equitativas para todos los jóvenes, particularmente los grupos marginados. **Metodología:** Se empleó una metodología de revisión de alcance para analizar sistemáticamente la literatura de diversas fuentes reputables, incluidos revistas revisadas por pares e informes de organizaciones como UNESCO y OMS, centrándose en el impacto de la educación física en la equidad social y el bienestar juvenil.

Discusión: Los hallazgos revelan que las prácticas inclusivas de educación física fomentan el trabajo en equipo, la resiliencia y la inteligencia emocional. Sin embargo, las disparidades de género y las barreras socioeconómicas obstaculizan el acceso, lo que requiere iniciativas comunitarias y estrategias de enseñanza sensibles al género para promover la participación de todos los jóvenes.

Conclusión:

La meta-revisión destaca la educación física como un motor crítico de cambio social y empoderamiento juvenil en Indonesia. Abordar los desafíos sistémicos a través de currículos inclusivos, capacitación de educadores y asignación equitativa de recursos puede asegurar que todos los jóvenes se beneficien de las ventajas de la actividad física, fomentando una sociedad más equitativa.

Palabras clave

Equidad, Educación Física, bienestar social, empoderamiento juvenil.

Introduction

By promoting integrated development beyond just the traditional academic output, physical education (PE) should have a central role in ensuring social welfare and equality for young Indonesians. Consistent with UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal 4, emphasize on quality education for all of quality education for all, including high-quality inclusive education, the inclusion of PE in the school curriculum nurtures not only the physical health, but also the social, emotional, and psychological health of students. Recent studies embrace inclusive physical education, emphasizing that children from different contexts, including with disabilities, can be helped (Gani et al., 2023). Additionally, PE enhances social inclusion through group assignments that enhance student emotional competence and interpersonal skills and therefore provide an enhancement to student social skills (Haegele et al., 2021). Research has found that formal, group-based sports can contribute to the development of resilience and better coping mechanisms among students—attributes that are critically important for their mental health during difficult times such as the current COVID-19 epidemic (Rogowska et al., 2020). In addition, the effective implementation of inclusive practices in physical education has been linked to more positive attitudes towards diversity and fairness on the part of teachers, thus emphasizing the importance of ongoing professional development and training (Protic-Gava et al., 2018). Physical education as well as explaining modern education priority of social justice and well-being also promotes the production of a fair society by providing the opportunity for all children to succeed irrespective of their social context (Sit et al., 2022).

The promotion of basic societal values such as respect, teamwork, leadership, discipline and empathy in the student community at large is largely is a function of physical education (PE). Structured games and sports also foster teamwork, so emphasizing the goal of cooperation and friendship at school is a vital component of what PE inculcates in young people. And because they articulate the importance of responsibility and character development as well as physical skills, models such as the TPSR approach are particularly effective in nurturing social-emotional learning. It is in these different contexts that TPSR urges students to take ownership over building polite relationships and understand the roles and emotions of others, thus greatly enhancing empathy and leadership skills. Research indicates that in physical education settings when students engage in group projects they develop social competencies as well as critical life skills such as dealing constructively with conflict and shared decision-making, and these skills are transferable outside of the gym and in students' interactions throughout the day (Cronin et al., 2019).

In addition, the application of cooperative learning strategies in physical education aids the creation of a classroom culture in which discipline and respect for the other could flourish. These are methods which make students have to work together as a group, thereby supporting that successful is a joint process and not an individualistic one. Findings indicate that the integration of social values in the physical education instruction contributes significantly to the psychosocial fitness of the students and increases their sense of belonging, especially when they are disadvantaged (Al-Khayari et al., 2024). Participation in activities that demand co-ordinated working and mutual support makes students respect diverse ways of thinking and skills, creating an environment with a culture of respect (Munira et al., 2022). The continued implementation of such pedagogical models, including TPSR and cooperative learning, within physical education not only prioritises athletic development but serves as a fundamental means of transforming individuals into socially responsible people with developed skills in emotional intelligence and leadership (Smithson et al., 2020).

Especially in less developed countries where children experience more difficulties, social welfare and equity are the central concepts in the development of the youth. Social welfare, or the quality of people's well-being in a society, is determined by their access to resources, opportunities, and relationships that uphold a good and healthy living. In contrast, equity emphasises fairness and justice (Hotman et al., 2025) in that there is equal opportunity for all young people regardless of wealth or poverty, gender or disability to access opportunity. Alas, millions of young men and women in low- and middle-income countries face vulnerabilities and fragilities like poor education facilities, deprivations in terms of health and work prospects, deprivations that can trap them in poverty, prevent them scaling up the

social ladder and compromise their personal growth. More systemic factors, such as poverty, discrimination, and poor infrastructure exacerbate these differences, rendering disadvantaged youths more susceptible to social exclusion and mental stress (Fithroni et al., 2024).

Particularly through physical education (PE) curricula that promote social inclusion and self-actualization, schools are quite crucial in addressing these inequalities. Physical exercise is one of the most effective social values for attaining respect, empathy, and cooperation, which help create a suitable and positive environment (Lozano & González-Palomares, 2023). Physically students' capacity are not only enhanced in programs employing pedagogical models such as TPSR and cooperative learning but they work well with their social and emotional developments also. Schools can play a key role in reducing social equity and toxicity gaps, by creating inclusive PE contexts in which they encourage all students to participate, thus empowering young people with competencies and confidence to enable every child to thrive. Outside the classroom, young people who are physically active and engaged in teamwork and sports are more likely to develop resilience and a strong sense of community, which helps to underpin long-term social welfare (Faisal et al., 2023).

Having nearly one third of its entire population as the youth between that ages of 10-24, Indonesia has this large and dynamic population as well-diverse that would indicate potential of forthcoming successful for socioeconomic development (Anindya Syifa Nuraini et al., 2024). But this promising cohort, it turns out, is very challenging too, particularly in terms of education gaps. Disparities across gender, geography and socioeconomic inequities create conditions that deny some a quality education and access to resources (Maridueña et al., 2024). While both gross and gender parity enrolment rates in primary education have improved, substantial dropout rates exist in secondary and higher education, including among girls and those in rural areas. These educational inequalities which, in turn reduce individual possibilities, hinder national development goals in general, need to point this fact Inter alia continue to perpetuate poverty and inequality (Damanik et al., 2025).

In the context of social welfare, young Indonesians face vulnerabilities that exacerbate their inequality. By enforcing social norms, and experiencing economic adversity, girls and disadvantaged girls face a greater limitation to access education, health care and services (Damanik et al., 2025). Whatever unstable situations they may face are made worse by child labor, early marriage or poor support structures. Young people appreciate much of what is taught in schools, but they are excluded where educational policies ignore these gaps. The COVID-19 pandemic burdened educational systems, and laid bare structural disparities: many young people living in rural areas did not have access to online learning platforms, therefore compromising the educational opportunities of the most disadvantaged young people (Vidarte Claros et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, Physical Education is referred to as Pendidikan Jasmani, Olahraga dan Kesehatan (PJOK), which translates to Physical, Sports, and Health Education. This subject plays a key role in promoting physical literacy and lifelong healthy habits among students. PJOK emphasises social values such as honesty, discipline, and cooperation as well as improving students' physical (Rosmayanti et al., 2024). Through models such as Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) in PJOK, children can learn by mutual help and respect for each other who are regardless of social background, so as to foster an inclusive culture. Effective physical education programmes can act to reduce educational equity gaps and contribute to a comprehensive education through the promotion of positive social interactions and enhanced emotional intelligence (Faisal et al., 2023). It is by instilling those values that PJOK can provide some practical help to Indonesian kids in growing up responsible and decent people, thereby enabling them to confront the difficulties they face today and make a difference in the societies from which they come.

Physical Education (PE) plays a critical role not only in promoting health and motor skills but also in contributing to broader social goals such as equity and justice. Especially for Indonesian youths, recent studies have highlighted the untapped potential of PE in addressing social inequalities. Hotman found that while PE is often framed within the context of physical fitness, its capacity to mend social disparities remains underexplored, particularly in countries like Indonesia where social service and provision gaps are stark (Hotman et al., 2025). The fragmented nature of existing research and the lack of comprehensive data hinder a deeper understanding of how PE can serve as a vehicle for social justice. In this regard, systematic or meta-reviews are crucial, as they offer a synthesized analysis to inform policies, curricu-

lum development, and pragmatic school implementations. This paper seeks to contribute to this discourse by outlining how various pedagogical models in PE can support both educational and social outcomes, particularly for marginalized youth.

One such pedagogical approach is the Health-Related Physical Education Model, which emphasizes the importance of physical activity in improving students' overall health and wellness. This model has gained traction in light of evidence linking physical activity with cognitive and academic benefits. Owen demonstrated that regular engagement in physical activity correlates positively with academic performance among youth, reinforcing the idea that PE should incorporate health-related objectives beyond traditional fitness metrics (Owen et al., 2018). Moreover, this model aligns with contemporary educational standards that promote physical literacy as essential to holistic student development, encompassing both physical and mental well-being (Souza, 2021). However, the implementation of this model may vary depending on contextual factors, particularly in resource-limited settings.

Another influential framework is the Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) Model, which fosters tactical thinking and decision-making through gameplay. Rather than focusing solely on skill execution, TGfU encourages students to grasp the strategic elements of sports in an authentic and meaningful way. This approach enhances physical literacy and promotes inclusive participation. The Sport Education Model, which shares several features with TGfU, has been examined by (Putra et al., 2024) for its holistic approach to learning, emphasizing teamwork, motivation, and healthy competition. Findings suggest that such models create more engaging learning environments and foster greater student motivation and participation in physical activities (Yuan, 2022), both of which are crucial for cultivating lifelong physical activity habits.

Complementing these approaches is the Self-Regulation Model in Physical Education, which focuses on empowering students to take ownership of their learning. Through setting personal goals, monitoring progress, and reflecting on outcomes, students develop metacognitive skills that benefit both their academic and physical performance. Pange and Budiman have shown that self-regulation interventions in PE can enhance students' engagement and lead to improved learning outcomes (Budiman, 2023; Pange, 2021). Moreover, the integration of self-regulated learning strategies has been linked to higher academic achievement, as it fosters critical thinking and intrinsic motivation (Albelbisi & Yusop, 2019). By embedding self-regulation into PE instruction, educators can support more meaningful, personalized learning experiences that extend beyond the gymnasium and into students' broader educational trajectories.

This kind of comprehensive understanding of the social contribution of PE on early development is the priority objective of the present proposed meta-review particularly in the specific backdrop of Indonesia's economic conditions. This review will be particularly important to scholars, educators, and policymakers by presenting the potential impact that physical education could be used as a powerful weapon for a social welfare and equity improvement. For researchers, it shall be a comprehensive overview of existing knowledge and research gaps. With the knowledge acquired from the review, teachers can improve student engagement through evidence-based practices in their curriculum, and thus foster basic social values. On the other side, the outcomes could inform policymakers to implement inclusive education to meet the needs of impoverished populations, leading to fair educational environment. Projects like these ensure that PE is not only about physical abilities but also among Indonesian children, a sense of community, accountability and social justice.

Method

To comprehensively analyze and synthesize the existing body of knowledge, this study adopts a meta-review approach, also known as a systematic review of reviews, which enables the integration of diverse findings across disciplines. Recognizing the complex intersections between education, public health, youth development, and social justice, this method allows for a more holistic understanding of how Physical Education (P.E.) contributes to promoting equity and social welfare among Indonesian youth. A scoping review framework was also employed to provide flexibility in mapping broad themes, identifying research gaps, and incorporating various types of literature including empirical studies, theoretical analyses, and policy reviews.



The data collection process involved retrieving peer-reviewed studies and credible reports from major academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, PubMed, and Google Scholar. These databases provided access to both national and international literature relevant to P.E., youth development, and social equity. In addition to academic sources, key documents from global institutions such as UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, ASEAN, OECD, and the World Bank were included to strengthen the international comparative perspective. These sources offered valuable insights into global best practices that could inform the development of inclusive and equitable P.E. policies in the Indonesian context.

Once the literature was gathered, thematic synthesis was applied as the primary method of analysis. Relevant data from each source—including researcher(s) and year, study title, methodology, and key findings—were compiled into a Summary of Selected Literature. This summary helped trace commonalities and variations across multiple studies. The process enabled the identification of dominant themes such as gender equity in sports, disparities in access to physical education across urban and rural regions, and the psychosocial and health-related benefits of inclusive physical education programs. Key pedagogical strategies—such as cooperative learning models and values-based education—emerged from various studies as effective in fostering empathy, leadership, and teamwork among youth. By comparing findings from Indonesia with international contexts, this approach made it possible to identify both challenges unique to the Indonesian setting and broader solutions that can be adapted globally.

Through this process, the review not only synthesized the available evidence but also revealed critical gaps in the current literature. Notably, there is a lack of longitudinal studies evaluating the sustained impact of inclusive P.E. programs in Indonesia, limited research addressing rural and low-resource areas, and insufficient evaluation of gender-responsive pedagogical practices. By identifying these gaps and mapping the contributions of P.E. to youth equity and welfare, the meta-review provides a comprehensive foundation for future research and policy development in Indonesia.

Table 1. Keyword Search Strategy and Selection Criteria

Component	Details
Keyword Search Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical education and youth welfare in Indonesia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PE and social equity - Inclusive education and health outcomes - Youth empowerment through sports and PE - Education policy and social development
Inclusion Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Published in the last 5 years - Focused on Indonesia or comparable global context - Related to PE, social equity, well-being, or inclusion - Applies educational, sociological, or public health frameworks
Exclusion Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studies focused solely on athletic performance or sports science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literature with no social or educational context - Reports lacking empirical basis or relevance to Indonesian youth

Results

Previous research on the contribution of physical education (PE) to social welfare and equity among youth has employed diverse methodologies across both local and global contexts. This meta-review is comprised of 10 studies with a variety of approaches - repeated cross-sectional work, longitudinal studies, experimental fieldwork, systematic reviews and descriptive quantitative methods. Collectively, these studies emphasize that PE and sports participation go beyond physical fitness they play a critical role in shaping psychosocial outcomes such as responsibility, social interaction, and character development. Several studies also addressed persistent gender disparities and unequal access to sports opportunities, underscoring ongoing challenges in creating equitable and inclusive PE environments.

The geographical scope of these studies spans Indonesia, Europe, Ireland, and Latin America, demonstrating that while PE-related issues are globally relevant, they are deeply shaped by specific socio-cultural contexts. For instance, research from France and Ireland highlights implicit discrimination in sports access based on gender and socioeconomic background, while Indonesian studies focus on character education integration and the role of sports volunteers in boosting community engagement. These findings reinforce the multifaceted role of PE in promoting social outcomes and call for more inclusive, policy-driven approaches to maximize its impact. The key studies included in this meta-review are summarized in the following table.



Table 1. Summary of Selected Literature

Researcher(s) & Year	Study Title	Methodology	Key Findings
(Owen et al., 2025)	Variations in adult physical activity and sport participation by gender in 28 European nations from 2005 to 2022	Repeated cross-sectional study	Sport is still underutilized as a contributor to overall physical activity, particularly among women. Increasing sport participation in women may help reduce the gender gap in physical activity.
(Carter et al., 2023)	Youth depression, anxiety, and physical symptoms are influenced differently by sports involvement, frequency, and skill: impacts of gender, neighborhood, and sport type	Longitudinal study with two data collection time points (6 months apart)	The impact of sports on mental health in adolescents depends more on subjective experience (competence and frequency) than on mere participation. Interventions should consider context, gender, and sport type.
(Anne & Moussi-Beylie, 2025)	Discrimination in access to sports associations: the effects of gender, origin and income	Experimental field study using the correspondence testing method	While overt (quantitative) discrimination is limited in most sports, implicit bias and barriers linked to cost (as in horseback riding) still restrict equitable access to sports clubs in France.
(Jackman et al., 2025)	A scoping review of research about women in sport: A perspective from the island of Ireland	Scoping review	Research on women in sport in Ireland has grown significantly, with over half of studies published in the last five years (2020–2024). The dominant research topics were injury, sport performance, and health and wellbeing. The majority of research used quantitative techniques and cross-sectional designs, often with a monodisciplinary perspective. Reports on gender and sex were not consistent.
(Bugten et al., 2025)	Evaluations of female teenage handball players' participation, social engagement, and pleasure of sport on a daily basis	Diary study	Coach's controlling rewards reduce attendance, peer support increases attendance and enjoyment in young female handball players during practices.
(Hotman et al., 2025)	Perspektivas Sociológicas Sobre la Desigualdad de Género en Los Deportes Indonesios: una revisión sistemática de la literatura	Systematic literature review	Gender equality in Indonesian sports is severely hampered by institutional obstacles, ingrained cultural norms, and skewed media portrayals. Reforming policies, increasing financing for women's sports, and actively promoting female athletes in the media are all necessary to address these issues.
(Fithroni et al., 2024)	Revisión sistemática de la participación del voluntariado deportivo en las estrategias para aumentar la participación de la comunidad deportiva: Participación del voluntariado deportivo en las estrategias para aumentar la participación de la comunidad deportiva	systematic review	Sports volunteers play a crucial role in enhancing community participation in physical exercise by boosting motivation and involvement in sports events. Volunteers support sports clubs in developing strategies to increase volunteer engagement, which in turn fosters greater community participation aligned with individual sports interests.
(Faisal et al., 2023)	Strengthen students' sense of responsibility in learning PJOK through the TPSR model	Literature Review (Library Research)	The TPSR model has demonstrated strong effectiveness and suitability in PJOK settings to promote student responsibility. The consistency of findings across multiple studies supports the adoption of TPSR in character education curricula in schools.
(Anindya Syifa Nuraini et al., 2024)	Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Karakter Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Jasmani, Olahraga, Dan Kesehatan (PJOK) Di Jenjang Sekolah Dasar	Cross-sectional study	PJOK effectively builds student character by instilling discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and sportsmanship through structured physical and reflective activities.
(Hananda et al., 2024)	Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Karakter dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Jasmani Olahraga dan Kesehatan di SMP Negeri 1 Sewon	Descriptive quantitative	81% of students were physically active, with 39% exercising twice a week, and 32% engaging in 0–20 minutes of physical activity per session. The highest intensity level reported was moderate (32%), indicating that many students in Greater Bandung remain actively involved in regular physical activity.
(Rosmayanti et al., 2024)	Analisis Indeks Tingkat Partisipasi Olahraga Siswa di Sekolah: Kajian dalam Perspektif Gender SMP dan SMA Se-Bandung Raya	Descriptive method	Demonstrated that early-life socioeconomic conditions had lasting impacts on adult health outcomes.

A diverse body of previous research has examined the multifaceted role of physical education (PE) and sports participation in promoting social equity, character development, and overall well-being. Several studies have focused on the gender disparities that persist in sport and physical activity engagement. For instance, (Owen et al., 2025) conducted a repeated cross-sectional study across 28 European countries, revealing that sport is still underutilized as a component of physical activity especially among women. They emphasized that increasing female participation could significantly close the gender gap



in physical activity. In a similar vein, (Anne & Moussi-Beylie, 2025) found through experimental field-work that although explicit discrimination in sports clubs is limited, implicit biases related to gender, socioeconomic background, and cost continue to hinder equal access, particularly in expensive sports such as horseback riding.

This gender-based inequality is further explored in a systematic review by (Hotman et al., 2025a), who highlighted how institutional, cultural, and media-related barriers severely limit gender equity in Indonesian sports. They called for structural reforms, including policy changes and increased investment in women's sports. Supporting this perspective, (Jackman et al., 2025) conducted a scoping review focusing on women in sport in Ireland, noting a recent surge in related research but also identifying inconsistencies in the way sex and gender are reported. These studies collectively underscore the need for more inclusive practices and targeted interventions to reduce gender-based disparities in physical education.

Other research has concentrated on the psychological and social benefits of youth participation in sports. According to (Carter et al., 2023) a longitudinal study which found that the mental health benefits of sports such as reductions in depressive and anxious symptoms are more strongly tied to subjective experiences of competence and participation frequency, rather than simple involvement. Similarly, (Bugten et al., 2025), using a diary study, showed that peer support positively affects enjoyment and attendance in adolescent female handball players, while controlling behaviors from coaches can reduce motivation.

This is supported by (Anindya Syifa Nuraini et al., 2024) and (Hananda et al., 2024) through the empirical researches that relate physical education with the development of value includes discipline, cooperation, and sportsmanship. Furthermore, (Rosmayanti et al., 2024) were demonstrated from junior and senior high school student sport participation statistics in Bandung that there is a strong influence of socioeconomic status in childhood on health behavior as adult.

Finally, the engagement of community level was raised by (Fithroni et al., 2024), which emphasized the crucial role of sports volunteers in motivating communities to engage in physical activity. Their systematic investigation demonstrated that when well-designed volunteer plans increase not only the attendance of the sporting, but also match personal interests and it can develop long-term community participation in sports culture. Collectively these studies demonstrate that physical education is more than just a conduit for physical activity, it has the power to act as a lever driving social integration, psychological health, gender equality and community participation, and that those that try and marginalize the subject are doing when we need it most I do not want to engage in the discussions on the future of physical education from a perspective of fear and panic, but I can't help but feel that it might end up being something that we read about in history books and I find that scary.

Physical Education and Gender Equity

"These are with fishnets and sky-high heels that no one would ever actually kick a ball with." Prevalent in Indonesia, gender disparities in sports participation and physical activity are an extension of societal norms and cultural attitudes towards females in sports. Research indicates that, although there is increasing awareness of the importance of physical activity in terms of health and well-being, female youth in Indonesia face challenging barriers to being active (Jasmani et al., 2024; Kuntjoro et al., 2022). Conventional gender perceptions about being less appropriate for women compared to their male counterparts, traditional gender roles that stigmatize girls from getting involved in physical competitive activities frequently come to light in sociocultural attitudes (Oliveira et al., 2022). These disparities are also exacerbated by practical hindrances, such as inadequate facilities, absence of peer or family encouragement, and limited support from educational institutions (Pedersen & King, 2023). This environment also hinders girls from experiencing the benefits associated with PA (i.e., improved physical fitness, social interaction, and mental health).

P.E. programs can make a difference when it comes to empowering Indonesian youth to achieve gender equality. Properly designed P.E. classes that teach students about inclusivity may help counteract this prejudice and encourage girls to get involved in organized athletic activities and sports in a meaningful way (Jasmani et al., 2024; Noor et al., 2023). Pedagogical frameworks that promote teamwork, respect and empathy between students, such as cooperative learning and the TPSR model, are effective in fos-



tering this environment (Muñoz-Helú et al., 2025). These interventions encourage supportive peer relations that encourage girls to engage in physical activity and team sports, which not only neutralize social influences but also allow girls to gain life skills (eg, resiliency, leadership) (Pedersen & King, 2023).

And the contribution to the gender equality, by which schools benefit from physical education, cannot be overstressed. Legislators and educators should prioritize gender-responsive training for P.E. teachers, so they can recognize and address the unique challenges girls face to participating in sports (Suhandrianto et al., 2024; Sumaryanti et al., 2018). Inclusive training for educators can help to create safe and supportive environments for girls (Zeng & He, 2024). This will also allow schools to conduct outreach campaigns to educate parents and the community about the value of girls participation in sports, thus fostering a cultural shift in attitudes towards girls involvement in sports. When supported and encouraged, female students' involvement in sports is known to increase significantly leading to better physical and psychological well-being as found in studies (Montalvo et al., 2019).

Addressing these gender inequalities also involves consideration of the intersection of place and class that exacerbate the challenges faced by rural Indonesian girls. Less prosperous regions frequently have limited access to high-quality sports facilities and programs, so further marginalizing girls who want to engage in physical activities. Policymakers must thus provide fair sharing of resources and opportunities for all, independent of gender or location. Mobile P.E. projects and community-based sports programs are two ways to improve access and so encourage involvement among underprivileged groups (Kwon et al., 2021).

Generally, a key component of larger social equity and welfare in sports is gender equality in participation. Indonesia can enable its female young people to flourish in many spheres of life, not only in sports, by improving the function of physical education in supporting inclusivity and shattering stereotypes (Jasmani et al., 2024; Noor et al., 2023). Beyond personal health and well-being, such changes help to create a more fair and inclusive society that values every member, regardless of gender (Mustofa et al., 2021).

Social and Psychological Benefits of PE and Sports Participation

Through different subjective experiences such feelings of competence, enjoyment, and peer support, participation in physical education (PE) and sports significantly improves young mental health. These elements are crucial for helping adolescents gain good mental health results. Studies show that young people's self-esteem and confidence strengthen when they accomplish mastery in physical activities, so directly influencing their general enjoyment and satisfaction in sports (Wilson et al., 2022). Positive subjective experiences in sports participation thus are essential aspects affecting mental health and well-being.

Young well-being also much depends on the frequency and kind of sports participation. Studies indicate that compared to individual sports, regular participation in organized sports—especially team-based activities—is linked to lower levels of anxiety and symptoms of depression (Tahira, 2023). This difference could be clarified through the social integration advantages team sports offer—which foster peer support and connectivity. The involvement of young people in sports generates a positive feedback loop whereby their relationships develop and their emotional and psychological health improves more often the more often they participate in sports (Ramer et al., 2025). In addition, organized sports offer ruled the environment that enable young people to navigate social situations, so strengthening useful psychosocial skills which promote their general well-being.

Youth experiences and outcomes in physical activities are much shaped by supportive surroundings, including the coaching styles and dynamics inside sports teams. Positive, caring coaches are more likely to help create settings that give psychological safety and inclusivity top priority (Bissett et al., 2020). These types of training programs enhance athletes' emotional and mental resilience in addition to their performance. Athletes feel empowered to take risks and learn from mistakes when coaches give positive reinforcement and foster a good environment, so developing a growth mindset (Ayala et al., 2024).

Youth empowerment, crucial to resilience development, is significantly influenced by their experiences in sports and physical activities. Participation in sports encourages young individuals to set and pursue goals, enhance their decision-making capabilities, and develop greater agency in their lives (Super et al.,



2018). The camaraderie and shared experiences within teams create opportunities for youth to learn valuable life lessons about teamwork, leadership, and perseverance. Such competencies are essential in navigating the complexities of adolescence and beyond, laying a foundation for personal development and social responsibility (McFadden et al., 2023)

The integration of positive youth development principles within PE and sports programs enhances their capacity to foster social and psychological benefits. Programs that emphasize inclusion, equity, and the holistic well-being of youth can create transformative experiences that contribute significantly to their mental health. Successful programs showcase the intersection of sport, health, and character building, illustrating how organized sports can be leveraged as a platform for positive psychosocial development (Torres et al., 2022). By means of focused interventions addressing both mental health and physical engagement, communities can maintain the value of sport participation for young people, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds.

Moreover, given the difficulties presented by current world events including the COVID-19 epidemic, the need of physical activity in the face of mental health crises has grown clearer. Young people who kept active in sports were found to be more suited to manage their stress and anxiety during isolation (Racine et al., 2021). Supporting young mental health is mostly dependent on schools and community programs that give sports and physical activities top priority, especially in recovery from such events. Crucially for their emotional well-being, these programs enable required social interaction and physical exercise.

Finally, the interaction of sports involvement, subjective experiences, and mental health results for young people highlights the need of a planned, inclusive approach in physical education initiatives. Acknowledging the need of social interactions, coaching techniques, and the influence of supportive surroundings will help young development projects grow. Using sports not only improves personal well-being but also strengthens group resilience, so enabling young people to meet obstacles head-on and so create better and more involved communities (LaForge-MacKenzie et al., 2022).

Character Education and Value Integration through PE

Physical Education is a powerful education platform that share values such as: responsibility, discipline, teamwork, respect, etc. One well known pedagogical model used to promote these outcomes is Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR). This model stresses personal and social development via deliberate physical activities and fosters an intra-personal sense of duty in pupils. It was found that when students are empowered to take on responsibility in sports, it results in increased intrinsic motivation and PE class satisfaction, which has a positive effect on their overall physical activity participation (Román et al., 2019). In the Indonesian system, which has a heavy preference for social values education, the assimilation of the TPSR model within the PE curriculum fits neatly with the cultural values of the society that focuses heavily on community and collaboration.

Indonesian school context data reveal positive effects on character effectuation due to PE implementation. Research has shown that students of the PE programme are more likely to describe higher levels of cooperation and good teamwork between them, which results in having better social relationships in and outside school (Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2020). A focus on group activities Social development is key in many of these programs, which means group activities abound that have students working together to build camaraderie and develop a common success. Furthermore, the emphasis on discipline in sports practice teaches students the need of keeping commitment, setting personal goals, and working hard to achieve core values that are fundamental for success in their educational activities and future careers (Wilhite et al., 2023). The good character qualities acquired in physical education go beyond the sports field to include students' academic performance and social contacts, so producing well-rounded people.

Moreover, including character education into physical education helps not only individual students but also supports more general social welfare in societies. Young people who learn the values of respect and sportsmanship grow empowered to act in socially conscious ways, in both personal relationships and competitive environments. This change in behavior can improve general school environment (Cumming et al., 2021) and cause bullying incidence to drop. Furthermore, when schools encourage character development through physical education, they create settings that give empathy and support top priority,



so fostering a culture in which mutual respect is maintained—especially in varied environments like Indonesia, where many cultural backgrounds coexist.

Emerging data shows that students become more resilient when character education is methodically included into the PE classes. The difficulties experienced in sports sometimes call for young people to be flexible and conquerable, which helps them to manage difficulty in life outside of the classroom (Choori, 2023). Competition in sports In a red race team you are taught how to control winning and losing and surely others important lessons necessary to be emotionally stable, so we compare competition practice with competition sports. This diverse perspective of character education equips youth to not only manage success in academic and physical endeavors, but also navigate the complexities associated with modern social challenges (Jeanes et al., 2021).

What's more, with the encouragement of character education by PE, this division might also become a way to promote gender equality. Schools also have a role to play in dispelling gender stereotypes that may be associated with participation in sports through inclusive PE settings that emphasize teamwork and cooperation. Encouraging boys and girls to engage in sports equally, may also contribute to creating a culture of equality and of empowered individuals that are crucial to support Indonesia to achieve social justice (Žatka et al., 2018). This sort of project can also raise awareness around female athletes and leaders, thus acting to inspire females to engage in sports and physical activities across all levels.

Finally, efficaciously teaching personal and social responsibility through physical education is an important factor for the integration of character and value in students. The lessons learned in physical education are more than life skills for our youth—they are a pathway to the development of a more just, peaceful world. The long-term implications for the social welfare of being more resilient, having better interpersonal relationships, and more cohesive society are likely to be both significant and far-reaching, as Indonesia continues to place character education above sport and physical education within PE (Remtulla et al., 2021). As a result, continued instruction into such class is essential in order to graduate students who are not only physically literate, but also responsible and empathetic citizens.

Socioeconomic and Community Factors

The study of the dynamics of youth development in other communities is heavily contingent on the realization of the long-term implications of socioeconomic background on sports participation and health findings. Children from low socioeconomic level (SES) families generally have less access to organised sports and recreation, leading to fewer levels of physical activity and poorer health than those of their more affluent counterparts (Owen et al., 2022). Financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and close availability of options in how to travel help explain this discrepancy. Families with lower financial resources are often unable to pay for registration and equipment costs needed to take the field and continue an inactive cycle of poor health that affects underprivileged youth at a higher rate (Sulz et al., 2023). Further, low SES children are less likely to engage in sport sampling, a key component of building physical literacy and long-term physical activity interest (Tandon et al., 2021).

Local volunteer opportunity and community sport and kids are positively impacted. Families who may be having issues get great support when the local community volunteers to plan and run sporting events. With volunteer coaches and mentors facilitating the interaction, many community-run competitive events also create a social network that provides support not only for youth but for the economic distress families are experiencing (Christensen et al., 2022). This participation contributes to a better young, a sense of community identity and belonging. Action at grassroots level enables communities to ensure that every child, irrespective of wealth, has the opportunity to participate in sport and is better able to access.

Reversing the decline in sports participation requires access and inclusion strategies that leverage community support. By collaborating, local authorities, schools and charities can ensure that young people can access quality and inclusive sporting events that reflect their interests and needs. Creating free or reduced-cost community sports programs and after-school sports programming designed to bridge children from various socioeconomic backgrounds, for instance, increases inclusivity and accessibility (Tandon et al., 2021). In addition, outreach initiatives targeting awareness building about the benefits of sport participation among children living in financial hardship can motivate families to participate and support their young to be active.



Community sports projects can potentially make a significant impact on broader health and fitness targets by tackling structural inequities. Interventions targeted at these disadvantaged groups of people who already have greater access to leisure-time activities can potentially decrease the social inequalities that account for disparities in health. Community-based sports programs using strategies to address these inequalities may enable young people to achieve better physical and emotional health (Wang & Wang, 2020). Facilitated access to sports facilities, especially in underrepresented groups, is identified as a pathway to increasing participation (Tandon et al., 2021). This universal access enhances sports participation and plays a key role in acquiring important life skills and promoting life-long physical activity.

Apart from physical health alone, actively engaging community members in youth sports programmes has a huge impact on social integration and community networks. Especially within less privileged neighborhoods where communities are frequently fragmented, the social capital developed by young athletes provides the potential to foster enhanced community sense of self, and a collective identity and solidarity—very important things indeed (Wilson et al., 2022). Social participation in sport also helps develop positive community relations that themselves may yield volunteers and supporters who champion health, education and well-being initiatives thereby reducing the barriers facing disadvantaged young people (Ferguson et al., 2019).

By means of community-based initiatives, also addressing structural and interpersonal barriers offers chances to inform parents and households on the value of sports involvement. Projects involving parents as volunteers or participants in their children's sports not only support but also inform parents on the advantages of sport for the psychological and physical well-being of their children (Gao et al., 2022). Shifting cultural attitudes toward sports can be mostly dependent on cooperative community efforts, especially in cases when participation may not be the norm so that children from all backgrounds may freely participate in sports activities.

Dealing with socioeconomic and community elements in sports participation calls for a variety of approaches meant to promote inclusion and accessibility. All society stakeholders—including governments, educational institutions, the business sector, and community organizations—will be needed fully for these activities. Through encouraging alliances and community solidarity, societies can successfully remove obstacles to young sport participation, so improving health outcomes and supporting equity in their local areas (Thuesen & Rogers, 2025). Such programs have long-term advantages for not only the directly involved people but also the larger society fabric, so promoting more fair and healthy communities.

Institutional and Policy Barriers

Globally, equity in physical education (PE) and sports is still a major problem, particularly in developing nations like Indonesia where structural obstacles sometimes prevent inclusive participation. For young people, physical education is absolutely vital in promoting health, social inclusion, and personal growth. Still, systematic disparities, cultural standards, poor policy execution, and limited resources all limit fair access to sports and physical activity. Although these difficulties are noteworthy, several encouraging treatments in Indonesia and other similar environments have shown promise in removing institutional obstacles and encouraging inclusiveness in physical education (ISPESH, 2024).

Gender inequality is one of the most ongoing difficulties guaranteeing fair access to physical education. Particularly in sports thought of as masculine, like judo or weightlifting, cultural standards and stereotypes in Indonesia often deter girls and women from participating in physical activities. Though women's involvement in sports has increased recently, Indonesian female athletes still are underrepresented in international events. Sports strategies, for the most part, tend to be gender-biased or gender-neutral but not gender-sensitive and this exacerbates the problem. Such tactics offer women athletes little opportunities to excel and meet men's level (Damanik et al., 2025).

Exclusion also extends to students with disabilities, a population that often has less access to quality physical education. Roughly a third of disabled school-aged children in Indonesia are not in any sort of learning setting at all. Unfortunately, these students frequently encounter barriers in the form of non-inclusive curricula, lack of teacher preparation, and inaccessible school building despite being enrolled. These factors may account for their secondary status in sports and physical education, and the concomitant lack of the social and physical benefits these programs provide.



Another structural issue lies in the disparities in sports facilities and material resources between urban and rural schools. Internet—especially in remote areas, high speed internet is no anyway—washing machines) are uncommon especially for the village. Furthermore, the shortage of professional PE teachers in those regions leaves most students little or no chance to receive physical education lessons. Increasing technology use in PEP exacerbates these inequities as rural schools generally have less access to the digital resources and connectivity found in urban settings.

Policy implementation is still a large challenge in Indonesia in its efforts to promote inclusive P.E. Local application of these policies, however, has not been so easy, despite progress of inclusive-education frameworks and other national education policies. Supported by foreign agencies like the Inclusive Education Initiative (IEI) Trust Fund, initiatives have been crucial in pointing up areas of poor service delivery and suggesting scalable solutions for underserved populations. Still, the difficulty of extending such initiatives all around is persistent (World Bank, 2024).

Notwithstanding these challenges, several Indonesian interventions provide encouraging models for advancing sports and PE equity. Supported by the World Bank, the Inclusive Education Initiative ran a program in five districts—Lebak, Cilacap, Bondowoso, Ponorogo, and Bima—that effectively evaluated and met the needs of more than 139,000 disabled children. This initiative shows the importance of focused interventions in raising learning results and so increasing access to inclusive education services (World Bank, 2024).

Supported by Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, the International Seminar on Physical Education, Sport, and Health (ISPESH) is another noteworthy endeavor. This event gives academics, professionals, and legislators a forum to exchange ideas and knowledge meant to raise quality of living by means of inclusive sports and physical education programs. By means of cooperative communication, ISPESH helps to mold more fair sports policies and promotes professional growth among teachers (ISPESH, 2024).

Attempts to solve gender inequality have also acquired momentum. Targeted initiatives aiming at empowering female athletes particularly those who question cultural norms by participating in male-dominated sports emphasize the need of encouraging surroundings. Two Indonesian female judo and weightlifting case studies show how institutional encouragement and parental support can remove cultural barriers. Such illustrations support the possibilities of gender-sensitive sports policies based on feminist theory to progress equal opportunities.

Emphasizing the human and cultural legacy of the event instead of only infrastructure, the Asian Games held in Indonesia in 2018 offered still another model for inclusion. The games inspired pride among many demographic groups and increased national unity and diversity, so encouraging greater sports participation. This legacy approach underlined how big athletic events could inspire more general social change (South China Morning Post, 2018).

Several suggestions surface if one is to properly handle these issues. Policymakers have to create and enforce gender-sensitive models in sports so that every athlete, regardless of gender, has equal chances and resources. By funding sustainable development, easily available infrastructure, and teacher training, the Indonesian government should also increase inclusive education initiatives. Through the growth of sports infrastructure and alliances with private and nonprofit sectors, rural areas call especially for specific attention. Policy execution can be strengthened by means of monitoring systems and encouragement of community involvement. Finally, extending knowledge-sharing platforms like ISPESH will help to highlight effective practices and guide inclusive policy development (ISPESH, 2024).

In summary, even if institutional obstacles including gender inequality, disability exclusion, infrastructure gaps, and policy execution limit fair access to physical education and sports in Indonesia, several interventions show directions for change. Learning from successful models and pledging inclusive policy and practice will help Indonesia make sure that every young person, from anywhere, gender, ability, or geography, gains equally from the transforming power of physical education.

Discussion

Especially focused on the gender disparity in athletic participation, the findings of the meta-review suggested the transformative impact of physical education (PE) on promoting better social welfare and equity among Indonesian youth. The existing social standards and societal attitudes that discourage women from taking part in sports indicate an important gap that could be bridged. While Indonesian girls still encounter significant barriers to their involvement in competitive sport, there is a growing recognition of the role physical activity plays in health and well-being. This situation shows the difficulty for the girls to access the benefits of physical practice, even if they undermine the potentialities for the female young people (Oliveira et al., 2022).

It emphasizes the importance of inclusive and challenging physical education programs that aim to dismantle preconceptions. Teachers may create contexts for girls to participate in sports and physical activity through pedagogical concepts such as cooperative learning and the TPSR (Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility) model. Crucial for building constructive peer relations, these models promote in students empathy, respect, and teamwork (Muñoz-Helú et al., 2025). Programs of this kind enable girls to take part in physical activity, thus “kicking back” against stereotypes, as well as aiding their development of critical life skills, such as resilience and leadership (Pedersen & King, 2023).

In addition to the current methodological approaches such as cooperative learning and TPSR, there is an urgent need to integrate broader pedagogical frameworks that fully harness the transformative potential of physical education (Sumaryanti et al., 2018). Models like health-related physical education emphasize lifelong wellness and equip youth with the knowledge and motivation for maintaining active lifestyles beyond school years. Likewise, project-based approaches such as service learning enable students to connect physical activity with civic engagement, fostering a sense of responsibility and purpose through real-world application. These models not only improve physical health but also stimulate social awareness, particularly when PE activities are framed as a means of contributing to community well-being (Noor et al., 2023; Suhandrianto et al., 2024). Moreover, motivational strategies that include gamification, student-led activities, or the use of digital tools like fitness apps and activity trackers can increase students' voluntary engagement in physical activity during their leisure time. When applied intentionally, these methods empower students—especially those from marginalized backgrounds—to see physical education not merely as a subject, but as a gateway to social connection, mental health, and long-term personal growth (Jasmani et al., 2024; Kuntjoro et al., 2022).

Besides, one cannot overestimate the role physical education plays in creating a positive gender balance at schools. Priority should be placed in gender-sensitive training of PE teachers by legislators and education leaders in order to equip them with the necessary tools to identify and tackle the specific challenges experienced by girl athletes. Environments that promote girls' sport participation in a safe and inclusive way can be facilitated through comprehensive training in assisting (Zeng & He, 2024). Also, interventions to educate parents and the community about the value of girls' sport participation may help to shift the culture towards acceptance and encouragement of girls in sport. This kind of community engagement is necessary if we are to help girls live in a world that challenges as well as encourages them, thereby increasing their rates of participation (Montalvo et al., 2019).

The study also underlines how geography and poverty intersect as compounding factors in the challenges faced by girls, particularly those in rural Indonesia. Many underdeveloped regions also lack access to good sports facilities and programs, aggravating the marginalization of girls who have an interest in physical movement. Policymakers need to ensure equal access to resources and opportunities for every young person, regardless of gender or geography. Community and school-based sports festivals and mobile senior PE programs to promote participation among low-SES groups may be effective (Kwon et al., 2021).

In addition to erasing gender equality barriers, the findings also emphasize the significant psychological and social benefits of young sports involvement. Physical education and organized sports can also have a positive impact on mental health outcomes by offering youth a sense of competence, enjoyment, and peer promotion. Regular participation in team sports is associated with low anxiety and depressed symptoms and emphasizes social integration as being important for mental health (Tahira, 2023). The



structured environments provided by organized sport additionally allow young people to develop important psycho-social skills, which emphasises the importance of promoting coaching practices that prioritize psychological safety and inclusion (Bissett et al., 2020).

Further, the infusion of the concepts of positive youth development in physical education and sport can create transformative experiences that are highly beneficial for mental health. For disadvantaged youth in particular, programs that highlight inclusivity and equity and holistic well-being, using sports as a platform for positive psychological growth is also possible (Torres et al., 2022). Recent global crises such as the COVID-19 epidemic have underlined the need of keeping up regular exercise as a coping strategy for anxiety and stress. Schools and community initiatives that give sports top priority during recovery phases are absolutely essential in helping young people's mental health, enabling required social contacts and physical activity (Racine et al., 2021).

The study also underlines how important character education is inside physical education. Through teaching responsibility, discipline, and teamwork, physical education transforms into a transforming tool for students' whole development. Particularly the TPSR model encourages social values and personal development by means of planned physical activities, so improving students' natural drive and participation in PE (Román et al., 2019). Beyond sports, this character education helps to improve academic performance and social contacts, which are vital for creating well-rounded people (Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2020).

Still, major institutional and policy obstacles exist even with the encouraging interventions the review highlights. Inequalities in gender, disability, and sports infrastructure still impede fair access to physical education and sports in Indonesia. The study advocates the creation of gender-sensitive models in sports policies in order to guarantee fair possibilities for every athlete. Furthermore, funding inclusive education initiatives and enhancing monitoring systems will help to solve issues affecting underprivileged groups and help to implement policies (Zeng & He, 2024)..

Finally, the meta-review shows the several ways that physical education might help Indonesian youth to achieve social justice and welfare. Indonesia can enable its young people to flourish in many spheres of life, not only in sports, by improving the part that physical education plays in promoting inclusivity, breaking down barriers, and tackling the particular difficulties faced by girls and underprivileged groups. And beyond the individual health and well-being dimension, such changes would contribute to a more just and inclusive society that values all of its members irrespective of their gender and economic status (Mustofa et al., 2021). Responsible, caring members of the community who ensure the health and well-being of society for the future are products of continued investment in inclusive physical education programs.

Conclusions

This article highlights to what extent (strategically) physical education (PE) contributes to the Indonesian young to have social welfare and gender equality. While the significance of exercise is increasing, gendered mediatechnic norms and traditional forms of masculinity continue to sanction women's bodies, if also in different ways, in a manner that tends to discourage them from exercising. Physical education programs that are inclusive of all students regardless of gender and utilize collaborative learning and TPSR have increased female involvement and have been instrumental in developing critical social skills such as resiliency and leadership.

(Schools and physical education teachers are the ones setting an encouraging and safe environment primarily for girls.) Key measures to drive a cultural shift towards inclusivity include gender-responsive teacher training and fostering parent and community support for female involvement in sports.

Furthermore, in particular in rural regions, various socioeconomic and geographical disparities accentuate limitations of access to sports facilities. Such measures are essential to ensure an equitable distribution of goods as well as community-based interventions in areas where under-privileged people live. In addition to similar psychological gains PE contributes also to mental health, self-confidence, and societal integration. The use of values such as responsibility, discipline and cooperation during sports

events improves the character-building of students through the incorporation of positive youth development in sports events.

However, institutional barriers such as gender discrimination, disability exclusion, and inequitable infrastructure hinder the development of inclusive and equitable physical education. To ensure access to all students, sports policies should be gender sensitive and monitoring systems should be reinforced. Indonesia has the opportunity, effective models to exploit as a generator nation of young generation that is strong, tough, and inclusive by utilizing physical education function as a social and character building institution. This creates a fairer society based on respect for all people regardless of sex or financial status.

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