



Parental and Teacher Perspectives on the Importance of Physical Education in School Learning

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Keywords

Perception ; Physical education; Parents and Teachers

Abstract

Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PE) plays an important role in supporting students' physical, mental, and social development; however, in practice it is still frequently regarded as a secondary subject compared to academic subjects. This study aims to analyze teachers' and parents' perceptions of the importance of PE in school learning and to identify whether there are differences in perception between both groups. This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive design, involving 60 respondents consisting of 30 teachers and 30 parents selected using purposive sampling. The research instrument was a closed questionnaire with a Likert scale, while data analysis techniques included descriptive statistics and an independent sample t-test. The results showed that both teachers' and parents' perceptions of the importance of PE were in the positive category, with teachers' mean scores higher than those of parents. However, the t-test results indicated no significant difference between the two groups. These findings suggest that teachers and parents fundamentally share relatively aligned views regarding the urgency of PE in learning. Thus, this study concludes that although descriptive differences exist, the shared perceptions between teachers and parents open opportunities to strengthen collaboration in supporting PE learning in schools more optimally.

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INTRODUCTION

Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PE) plays a strategic role in comprehensively supporting the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of students (Manzano-Sánchez et al., 2024). However, in school educational practice, PE is still frequently positioned as a secondary subject that receives less attention compared to academic subjects (Ridwan et al., 2023). The dominance of orientation toward cognitive achievement has caused the holistic educational values embedded in PE to be underutilized (Xu et al., 2025). On the other hand, the increasingly sedentary lifestyles of students due to technological advancements reinforces the urgency of strengthening PE learning in schools (Wu et al., 2024).

This phenomenon is compounded by the still-prevalent practice of reducing PE class hours or using it as a substitute subject under certain conditions (Setyawan et al., 2025). Such conditions reflect the low priority given to PE in school-level curriculum policy and implementation (Magonde et al., 2017). In addition, parents' tendency to evaluate their children's success based on academic achievement further weakens PE's position in the educational system (Yamamoto et al., 2023). Limited understanding of PE's benefits in supporting students' physical and mental health is a contributing factor that reinforces the marginalization of this subject (Ridwan et al., 2023).

In the context of learning, PE teachers play an important role as both facilitators and agents of character development in students through physical activity (Rubio-Valdivia et al., 2024). However, the low appreciation for PE has implications for professional pressure and declining teacher motivation in delivering instruction (Xu et al., 2025). On the other hand, parental involvement in supporting children's physical activity has been shown to have a significant influence on students' participation and attitudes toward PE (Fleckman et al., 2022). Collaboration between teachers and parents is a key factor in creating a learning environment that optimally supports PE instruction (Yamamoto et al., 2023).

A number of studies show that PE contributes positively to students' mental health and well-being, including reducing stress levels and improving quality of life (Han et al., 2025). Furthermore, the integration of physical activity with social-emotional learning has been proven to enhance student engagement and build a positive learning climate (Jackson et al., 2024). Nevertheless, other research indicates that systemic support for PE development remains limited, both in terms of policy and public perception (Yamamoto et al., 2023). This suggests a gap between the empirical benefits of PE and the reality of its implementation in schools.

Based on these conditions, the central problem of this study lies in understanding how teachers and parents perceive the importance of PE in school learning (Xu et al., 2025). More specifically, this study formulates the following research questions: (1) what are teachers' perceptions of the role and urgency of PE, (2) what are parents' perceptions of the role and urgency of PE, and (3) is there a significant difference between teachers' and parents' perceptions of the importance of PE in schools (Setyawan et al., 2025)? This problem formulation is important because the perceptions of both groups influence the support for and success of PE learning implementation.

This study aims to analyze teachers' and parents' perceptions of the role and urgency of PE in school learning (Sugiyono, 2021). Additionally, this study seeks to identify differences in perception between the two groups as a basis for understanding the dynamics of support for PE learning (Setyawan et al., 2025). A descriptive quantitative approach was employed to obtain an objective and measurable picture of respondents' perceptual tendencies (Sugiyono, 2021).

Academically, this study is relevant in strengthening the field of Physical Education, Sports, and Health, particularly regarding social and cultural perceptions that influence PE learning implementation (Mizzoni et al., 2023). This study also contributes to filling the gap in research that simultaneously compares teachers' and parents' perceptions of PE (Fleckman et al., 2022). The findings are expected to serve as a basis for formulating collaborative strategies between schools and parents to continuously improve the quality of PE learning (Magonde et al., 2017).

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive design to objectively describe teachers' and parents' perceptions of the importance of Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PE) in schools (Sugiyono, 2021). This approach was chosen because it can generate numerical data that can be analyzed to examine respondents' perceptual tendencies systematically (Arikunto, 2019). The research object was focused on perceptions of the role and urgency of PE, while the research subjects consisted of teachers and parents of grade VII students at SMP Negeri 35 Bandung (Sugiyono, 2021). Sampling was conducted using purposive sampling with specific criteria, resulting in 60 respondents consisting of 30 teachers and 30 parent respondents (Sugiyono, 2021). The research instrument used was a closed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions across various pre-established indicators (Sugiyono, 2021).

This instrument was adapted from relevant previous research and adjusted to the PE context (Fleckman et al., 2022). The data obtained were quantitative in the form of respondents' answer scores for each statement (Arikunto, 2019). Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires directly to respondents who met the research criteria, so that the data obtained reflects actual field conditions (Sugiyono, 2021).

Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics to describe respondents' perceptual tendencies (Sugiyono, 2021). Additionally, a comparative analysis was conducted using an independent sample t-test to examine differences in perception between teachers and parents (Sugiyono, 2021). Prior to hypothesis testing, normality tests were conducted to ensure the suitability of the analysis (Sugiyono, 2021). The research procedure was carried out systematically from problem identification to conclusion drawing, as presented in the research flowchart in **Figure 1**.

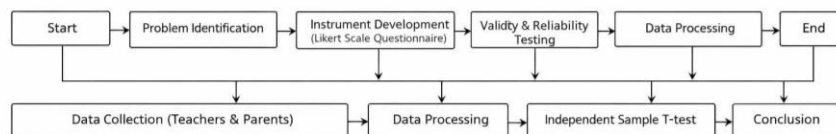


Figure 1. Research process diagram

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that teachers' perceptions of the importance of Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PE) were in the high category. This is reflected in the mean scores, which indicate that the majority of teachers viewed PE as an important component in supporting the holistic development of students. These findings suggest that teachers have a strong understanding of PE's role not only in the physical domain, but also in the formation of character, discipline, and social skills in students. Academically, these results reinforce the view that PE teachers are key actors in integrating holistic educational values into the learning process (Ridwan et al., 2023).

In contrast to teachers, parents' perceptions of PE were also in the positive category, but at a relatively lower level. The data revealed that while most parents acknowledged the importance of physical activity, there was still a tendency to prioritize academic subjects over PE. This indicates a gap in understanding between the empirical benefits of PE and the perceptions prevalent in the family environment. This finding is consistent with previous research stating that parents tend to evaluate their children's success based on academic achievement (Yamamoto et al., 2023), causing PE's role to often be seen as less of a primary priority in children's education.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis Results of Teachers' Perceptions

Items	Mean	Std.Dev	Description
Statement 1	4,83	0,38	Very Positif
Statement 2	4,63	0,67	Very Positif
Statement 3	4,77	0,43	Very Positif
Statement 4	4,47	0,63	Very Positif
Statement 5	4,37	0,67	Very Positif
Statement 6	4,80	0,41	Very Positif
Statement 7	3,90	0,96	Positif
Statement 8	4,30	0,75	Very Positif
Statement 9	4,33	0,66	Very Positif
Statement 10	4,57	0,68	Very Positif

Based on the results in **Table 1**, it is evident that the majority of respondents fell into the high category, indicating teachers' professional awareness of the importance of PE in the education system. This reinforces the argument that direct experience in the learning process provides a more comprehensive understanding of the values of physical education (Xu et al., 2025). Thus, the data not only illustrates numbers but also reflects teachers' position as primary actors in strengthening PE learning in schools..

In contrast to teachers, parents' perceptions of PE were also in the positive category, but at a relatively lower level. This indicates that although parents recognized the importance of physical activity, there was still a tendency to prioritize academic subjects over PE. This phenomenon reflects the influence of social values that place academic achievement as the primary indicator of student success (Yamamoto et al., 2023).

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis Results of Parents' Perceptions

Items	Mean	Std.Dev	Description
Statement 1	4,63	0,49	Very Positif
Statement 2	4,76	0,43	Very Positif
Statement 3	4,43	0,56	Very Positif
Statement 4	4,53	0,58	Very Positif
Statement 5	4,00	0,83	Positif
Statement 6	4,60	0,50	Very Positif
Statement 7	4,56	0,57	Very Positif
Statement 8	4,53	0,51	Very Positif
Statement 9	4,33	0,71	Very Positif
Statement 10	4,37	0,61	Very Positif

Based on **Table 2**, the distribution of parents' responses fell in the moderately high to high categories, but was not as strong as that of teachers (Su et al., 2022). This indicates a gap in understanding between the school and family environments regarding the urgency of PE in learning (Yamamoto et al., 2023). This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that limited parental understanding can affect support for students' physical activity (Su et al., 2022). Thus, the data not only illustrates numerical differences but also reveals differences in value orientation toward education.

To address the research question regarding perceptual differences, an analysis was conducted using independent sample t-test which showed no significant difference between teachers' and parents' perceptions of the importance of PE. These results indicate that both groups hold relatively aligned views, despite descriptive differences in mean values. Therefore, the differences in perspective that emerged were not strong enough to constitute a statistically meaningful difference and more likely reflect normal perceptual variation based on each group's experiential background.

Table 3. Independent Sample T-test Results

Group	Mean	t	Sig. (2 tailed)	Note
Teacher	44,96	0,174	0,863	Not Significant
Parent	44,76			

Based on **Table 3**, the Levene's test result also showed a significance value of 0.556, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the variances of both groups are homogeneous; therefore, the analysis proceeded using the equal variances assumed. Furthermore, the t-test result showed a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.863, which is greater than 0.05, leading to the conclusion that there is no significant difference between teachers' and parents' perceptions of the importance of PE in schools. a significant difference between teachers' and parents' perceptions of the importance of PE in schools.

Furthermore, the mean difference of 0.200 indicates that the perceptual difference between the two groups is relatively very small. The t-value of 0.174, which is close to zero, further indicates that the between-group difference is not strong enough to be considered statistically meaningful. Thus, the descriptive differences observed do not have inferential power to be generalized.

These findings indicate that teachers and parents fundamentally share relatively aligned perceptions regarding the importance of PE in learning (Xu et al., 2025). This shared perception may be influenced by growing awareness of the importance of physical activity for students' health and development, both in school and family environments (Han et al., 2025). Thus, despite differences in experiential background, both groups consistently demonstrate perceptual tendencies that do not differ significantly.

Theoretically, these results reinforce the view that individual perception is not only shaped by direct experience, but also by the influence of information and the broader social environment (Petiot & Desbiens, 2022). In this context, parents are likely to have developed a sufficiently good understanding of PE's benefits, resulting in perceptions that do not differ significantly from those of teachers (Tsuk et al., 2026). This also indicates that the importance of physical activity has begun to be more widely recognized by society (Su et al., 2022).

Thus, the t-test results affirm that there is no meaningful perceptual gap between teachers and parents, indicating that both groups possess equal potential in supporting the implementation of PE learning in schools (Yamamoto et al., 2023). This finding is significant as it highlights the opportunity to build stronger collaboration between schools and parents in continuously improving the quality of PE learning (Magonde et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that both teachers and parents hold positive perceptions regarding the importance of Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PE) in school learning. Although teachers demonstrated slightly higher perception scores than parents, the absence of a statistically significant difference suggests that both groups share a relatively similar understanding of the value of PE. This finding supports the concept of holistic education, which emphasizes that students' physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development should be fostered in an integrated manner through educational experiences, including physical education.

The results are consistent with previous studies highlighting the important role of physical education in promoting students' physical well-being, mental health, and social development (Lin et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2024). Furthermore, the similarity in perceptions between teachers and parents aligns with the findings of Fleckman et al. (2022) and Yamamoto et al. (2023), which emphasize that support from both schools and families is essential for encouraging student participation in physical activity and strengthening positive attitudes toward physical education. Unlike studies reporting limited parental awareness of the broader educational benefits of physical education, the present findings suggest that parents in this context demonstrate a level of understanding that is relatively comparable to that of teachers.

From a practical perspective, the convergence of perceptions between teachers and parents provides a strong foundation for strengthening school–family collaboration in supporting PE programs. Theoretically, the findings reinforce the view that perceptions toward educational programs are shaped through both direct experiences and social influences, resulting in shared beliefs regarding the educational value of physical activity. Nevertheless, the study is limited by its relatively small sample size and focus on a single school context. Future studies are therefore recommended to involve broader and more diverse populations to examine whether similar patterns emerge across different educational, cultural, and socio-demographic settings.

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