



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Unpacking University Teachers' Perspectives of Physical Education Program at the University Level in Nepal

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Abstract

Physical education teachers play a central role in creating meaningful learning experiences for students through physical activities in the physical education program. The effective implementation of a physical education program largely depends on how teachers perceive its focus. In this context, the present study explored how university physical education teachers perceive the physical education program under the Faculty of Education, at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. The study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design. Altogether, 18 physical education teachers from different types of colleges participated in the study. A Facebook Messenger group where physical education teachers had joined voluntarily as members, was chosen as a data collection source. Group chats among teachers spanning from April 20, 2021, to April 20, 2023, were utilized as data. The data were abstracted to the Words file, translated and analyzed by using a qualitative content analysis approach. The analysis resulted in three interconnected themes: (a) conceptual ambiguities about the purpose of physical education (PE), (b) high expectations and critical reflections on senior faculty members in PE, and (c) anxieties about subject merger and the rise of sports science. The findings reveal a widespread conceptual ambiguity among physical education teachers regarding the primary focus of physical education programs, which shapes much of their discourse. This ambiguity also appears to fuel tensions and anxieties over potential shifts or mergers within the academic community. The findings imply the need for a critical review of both the curriculum and its implementation within broader PE programs to clarify their purpose, reinforce disciplinary boundaries, and support PE teachers in developing a coherent vision for the field.

Keywords: physical education program, teachers' perspectives, professional development, pedagogy, university, Nepal

Introduction

Physical education (PE) is an academically structured program designed to support students in their all-round development through physical activities (PA) and sports (Pangrazi & Beighle, 2019). It provides systematic instruction in areas such as exercise, games and sports, nutrition, and healthy living based on a developmentally designed curriculum (Pangrazi & Beighle, 2019; SHAPE America, 2024). PE aims to cultivate physically literate individuals who possess adequate knowledge and necessary skills to engage in lifelong PA and promote overall health for an active and productive life (SHAPE America, 2024). PE is typically offered in schools or universities. It provides children with a foundation for understanding the significance of lifelong engagement in PA and sports. Moreover, PE upholds individuals' right to play, and helps motivate children to pursue movement education by designing an engaging and inclusive curriculum (UNESCO, 2015).

PA, on the other hand, refers to any bodily movement, including structured activities like sports and unstructured activities such as walking, dancing, and running. It aims to promote health-enhancing movement (Pangrazi & Beighle, 2019), which improves physical health, enhances fitness levels, and fosters overall well-being. It can take place anywhere and does not necessarily require schools or universities. Additionally, sports refer to ruled-based activities that are often competitive in nature. It requires specific training and skills, aiming to win or achieve excellence (McKibbin, 2011).

The primary goals of PE, PA, and sports are different; however, they are interrelated. PE serves as a foundation for the fostering of regular PA and sports (Sallis & McKenzie, 1991). Well-structured PE can significantly boost children's moderate-to-intense PA levels (Trudeau & Shephard, 2005). Additionally, expanding the physical education program (PEP) in schools may

be an effective intervention for combating obesity in the early years (Datar & Sturm, 2004). Participation in PE can encourage students to adopt an active lifestyle and engage in PA outside of school hours.

PE teachers are key agents in creating a space for learning PA and sports skills through systematic instruction. Teachers' dedication, capacity, and motivation play a crucial role in how PE is effectively implemented (Erpič, 2013; Zhang et al., 2012). Pedagogical strategies used by teachers are central to the educative process. Studies suggest that a variety of pedagogical strategies should be included for effective classroom teaching (Madsen et al., 2025; Ní Chróinín et al., 2015). Teachers are the main actors in adapting teaching methods, materials, and content to meet the diverse needs of students. This might include providing alternative ways of disseminating or constructing knowledge, as well as learning specific skills relating to sports and PA.

Teachers are expected to create a learning environment that provides students with hands-on experience based on their interests and needs (Jarvis et al., 2017). Researchers such as van Munster et al. (2019) emphasize that effective pedagogical approaches in PE classes require collaboration among teachers, students, parents, and specialists from planning to evaluation. These strategies are typically acquired during a teacher's university education. However, how a PE teacher develops pedagogical strategies and subject knowledge may depend largely on their perception of the goal of a PE program. Research such as Asún et al. (2020) indicates that PE teachers often perceive teacher education in PE as less effective, particularly in developing teaching competencies. Moreover, many higher education institutions provide inadequate support for PE teachers' continuing professional development (CPD), compounded by challenges such as low salaries, limited career progression, and

scarce CPD opportunities (Mordal-Moen & Green, 2014; Podstawski et al., 2022). These constraints not only shape teachers' expectations but also influence students' attitudes towards PE (Freire et al., 2018), which have been found to be moderately associated with participation and academic achievement (Li et al., 2014).

Teacher education programs (TEP), also known as pre-service teacher training for prospective teachers, are widely established across the globe. In Nepal, the history of TEP is relatively short but predates the establishment of universities in the country. TEP was formally introduced in 1953 with the launch of the Basic Teacher Training Program. However, the academic orientation of teacher education began with the establishment of the College of Education in 1956. This college was later renamed the Faculty of Education (FoE) under Tribhuvan University (TU) (Faculty of Education, 2022). The primary mandate of FoE is to contribute to national development by preparing trained and competent teachers across various levels and subject areas. Currently, the FoE offers 17 programs, among which the physical education program (PEP) is one. Thus, the key aim of the PEP is to produce qualified PE teachers required for the schools level as well as to develop high-level educational professionals, such as researchers, planners, and educators in the field (Faculty of Education, 2022). Currently, various universities in Nepal, including TU, Far-Western University, Mid-Western University, and Gandaki University, offer physical education programs, often in combination with health education. TU also offers health and physical education as an integrated subject at the bachelor's level, while the disciplines are treated more distinctly at the master's and MPhil levels. The PEP is offered only by Tribhuvan University in Nepal, while other universities offer this program only at the bachelor's level (Acharya, 2023a). This structure reflects a broader tendency within

higher education in Nepal to position PE in close association with health education, rather than as a fully independent academic field.

Evidence indicates that, in Nepal, graduates of the FoE can have opportunities to choose career path in various fields. However, the majority of PE graduates are employed in teaching (Acharya et al., 2025; Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2021). Within these institutions, teachers are expected not only to teach theoretical content and games-specific practical skills, but also to train students in pedagogical skills to prepare them to become competent teachers (Acharya, 2022a). This multifaceted role, at times, leads to confusion among teachers about their core responsibilities and professional identity. The existing literature shows that since the introduction of the PEP in Nepal in 1996, fewer than 200 students have completed a master's degree in PE (Department of Physical Education, 2024), while more than 400 colleges under various universities across the country run health and physical education programs as an integrated major subject at the bachelor level alone (Faculty of Education, 2022). This indicates a significant gap in the production of trained human resources in the field of PE. Moreover, there is still a high demand for qualified teachers, though enrollment in PEP remains remarkably low. Many graduates continue to seek employment in this field, while those already working as PE teachers are looking for alternative careers regardless of their academic background (Acharya, 2022b, 2023a). In this context, existing literature in Nepal has primarily explored university teachers' motivation and professional experiences in general educational settings (Acharya, 2023a; Dhungana et al., 2024). However, limited attention has been given to how physical education teachers specifically perceive the PEP within which they are engaged. While studies have addressed broader issues of teaching and institutional

practices (Acharya, 2023b; Dahal & Baral, 2024), they have not sufficiently examined teachers' understanding of the purpose, structure, and academic positioning of PE programs. This represents a contextual and conceptual gap in the literature, as research focusing on discipline-specific perspectives, particularly in PE remains underexplored. Given this gap, it is crucial to explore university teachers' perceptions of the PE program to better understand how they interpret its intended purpose within the FoE at TU, Nepal. Addressing this gap will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the academic and professional positioning of PE in higher education contexts where the discipline is still evolving. In response to the identified research gaps, the present study is guided by the following research question:

How do university PE teachers perceive the purpose of the PEP, and what challenges and tensions do they experience in its implementation?

Methodology

This study is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, which assumes that reality is contextual, subjective, and socially constructed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The understanding of university PE teachers regarding the PEP is viewed as shaped by their interpretation within specific social and institutional contexts. A qualitative descriptive research design (Merriam & Grenier, 2019) was employed to capture and analyze these interpretations.

Participants

The participants in this study were PE teachers, all holding master's degrees in PE and teaching at colleges affiliated to TU. Under TU, there are three types of colleges: constituent, community, and privately-run institutions. A Messenger group consisting of 54 PE teachers from these three types of colleges was created by teachers themselves as an open forum to discuss PE-related

issues. As the first author was a member of the group, this platform was deliberately selected as a data source to access the discussions and viewpoints shared among the teachers. Although the group included 54 members, only 18 actively contributed their opinions in the group's chat during the study period (see Table 1 for demographic details). The analysis in this study is based on the responses and perspectives of these 18 teachers.

Table 1

Participants Demographic Information

Participants (Pseudonym)	Types of college	Sex	Years of teaching experience
Aakash	Constituent	M	6
Bibek	Constituent	M	7
Upakar	Constituent	M	12
Mohan	Constituent	M	11
Tirtha	Community	M	5
Sandesh	Community	M	3
Hareram	Community	M	5
Basmati	Community	F	8
Kedar	Community	M	14
Nikunja	Community	M	15
Putana	Community	F	6
Okil	Community	M	6
Loku	Private	M	7
Chintamani	Private	M	6
Bhaskar	Private	M	4
Sancha	Private	F	6
Udaya	Private	M	6
Sobha	Private	F	5

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected from a pre-existing Facebook Messenger group of PE teachers. Group chats spanning from April 20, 2021, to April 20, 2023, were selected as the primary source of information. Although the data span a two-year period, the focus of this study was not on temporal changes but on identifying

recurring patterns in participants' experiences and discourses. As an active member of this group, the first author was able to gain a thorough understanding of the context and dynamics of the discussions. The Messenger group chats were of two types: open and prompt-based responses. The open chats were free-flowing discussions among participants in which discussions were not influenced or mediated by the researchers. In prompt-based responses, the first author posed questions, such as; how does your campus assigns subjects to you? and have you had any opportunities to participate in professional development training?. In this process, the first author encouraged participants to respond asynchronously, focusing on the prompts. This approach allowed thoughtful, reflective, and rich insights to emerge from the participants. The group chats were primarily in Nepali Romanized script, while some were in English. These chats were systematically archived and later exported to a Word file and uploaded to the Atlas.ti9 software for systematic coding and categorization.

Data Analysis

As the data in this study were textual, a qualitative content analysis approach (Schreier, 2012) was used to systematically analyze the data. This approach is particularly suitable for organizing and interpreting qualitative textual data while maintaining a strong focus on participants' subjective insights expressed through the texts. As suggested by Schreier (2012), the analysis followed three key phases: data preparation, coding frame and coding process, and theme development.

Data Preparation

In this stage, first, the first author exported all the chats from the Messenger group to a Word file in text format. Second, he carefully and thoroughly screened the text, removed irrelevant information such as greetings, emojis, and deleted duplicate content, focusing exclusively on responses

directly related to the research questions. Third, he manually translated the text from Nepali (primarily Romanized) into English where applicable. Fourth, the first author read and reread the translated text multiple times to familiarize himself with the dataset. This 'reiterative process' (Schreier, 2012) allowed him to identify preliminary patterns and nuances in participants' explanations. Throughout the data preparation phase, the first author wrote reflexive notes and memos to document initial group-chat data and subsequent transcription and familiarization processes. Notes were recorded continuously while reviewing the chat data and during transcription to capture immediate impressions, thereby minimizing reliance on retrospective recall. These notes documented impressions of the dataset and potential coding categories, which eventually informed the subsequent development of the coding frame (Schreier, 2012).

Coding Frame and Coding Process

While developing the coding frame, both inductive and deductive approaches were used. Deductive categories were derived from the literature review on PEP, particularly on the PEP and broader challenges in teacher education. These included categories, such as perception and understanding of PEP purpose, teacher motivation, and perceived challenges in teacher education. At the same time, an inductive coding strategy was used to construct categories and sub-categories directly from the data. In doing so, an open coding approach was applied where descriptive codes were given to meaningful segments of the textual data (Schreier, 2012). Based on conceptual similarities, the initial codes were grouped and regrouped into broader categories. In order to maintain clarity and dependability, a coding frame was developed that included main categories, subcategories, and definitions for each. Once a coding frame was constructed using a subset of the data,

further necessary refinements were made to remove overlapping ideas. This process ensured that constructed categories were mutually exclusive. The entire dataset was systematically coded using Atlas.ti9 software, where predefined (deductive) codes were applied alongside emergent (inductive) codes. The coding frame was iteratively refined within the software as analysis progressed. Throughout the coding process, the first author critically engaged with the dataset and maintained a reflexive memo to capture emerging patterns and ensure analytic decisions.

Theme Development

At this stage, the categories and subcategories were thoroughly reviewed and analyzed by three authors to construct main themes that captured the core patterns in participants' descriptions (Schreier, 2012). Themes were constructed through synthesizing related categories and identifying underlying meaning within the data. During this process, all three authors discussed the preliminary themes. Based on these discussions, the themes were further refined and, where necessary, renamed to ensure conceptual clarity and alignment with the data.

Ethical Considerations

Given the use of a Facebook Messenger group as the data source, special attention was paid to ethical concerns. The first author informed participants about the purpose of the study and the anonymity of their details. Verbal informed consent was obtained from participants to use their messages posted in the Messenger groups for research purposes. To ensure confidentiality, all identifying information was anonymized. Pseudonyms were used in reporting findings.

Results

Conceptual Ambiguities about the Purpose of PE

PE, PA, and sports are distinct disciplines,

yet interrelated. While PE is recognized as an academic subject (Pangrazi & Beighle, 2019), PA encompasses a broader lifestyle behavior, and sports are defined as a more skill- and performance-oriented pursuit (McKibbin, 2011). Participants expressed a mixed but often confusing understanding of these disciplines. None of the participants defined these terms differently, rather they viewed them as synonyms. In this context, Aakash said, "these terms are used interchangeably", while Mohan expressed, "I do not think they are different. By definition, they may be different, but their purpose is the same." Participants often viewed PE as a subject to teach sports skills to prepare individuals for competition or as trainers.

When asked about the main purpose of the PE program is at the university, most of them answered that PE aims to prepare sports teachers, coaches, and trainers. Only a few participants expressed its role in providing pedagogical skills and knowledge of sports. For example, Udaya stated, "Physical education does not mean not thinking about sports. It should help us to pursue careers even in sports, not only in the teaching profession." In contrast, Bibek argued, "A physical education program is for preparing teachers, not for producing players or coaches."

This melding of PE with sports without a clear distinction of their purpose suggests that PE teachers' understanding of PE programs is highly influenced by a performance-oriented paradigm that focuses on physical competence, technical skills, and competition over academic or pedagogical development. Moreover, many participants highlighted either content knowledge or sports skills but very few emphasized the essential value of the program, that is, pedagogical skills.

The study reveals that many participants prioritized sports training over academic scholarship. Their main focus was on mastering sports skills, but not pedagogical knowledge and skills to teach PA and sports.

Moreover, they emphasized sports activities such as refereeing, officiating, and sports training rather than enhancing academic excellence. For example, Okil noted, "if we are equipped with sports skills, we do not need to learn teaching skills. We can teach easily." Echoing this view, Loku expressed, "PE programs should provide coaching and officiating skills so that we can get a job in sports training and officiating."

Participants expressed that research and publication were not their priority. Many stated that research and teaching are entirely different activities, and they primarily teach students. Most of them reported that their master's thesis was not related to pedagogy, but sports skills and physical fitness. This indicates that university teachers have ambiguities in conceptualizing the aim of PE programs, leading them to be confused about their priority area in their current profession.

High Expectations and Critical Reflections on Senior Faculty in PE

In a program or institution, certain people, as human agency, hold position and power. In academic institutions, certain individuals hold positions of authority and influence the overall institutional activities. In Nepali universities, senior professors, or permanent teachers serve as department heads and chairperson of subject committees. As experts, these people are often invited to the curriculum development process. This study reveals that teachers, particularly those teaching in community and privately run colleges, have high expectations from senior faculty. Participants perceived that the PE subject committee and Central Department of Physical Education hold the executive power, such as recruiting part-time teachers, deploying teachers for practical exams, influencing TU service commissions, the Teacher Service Commission, and the Curriculum Development Centre. They also expressed expectations that the subject committee and senior teachers would interfere in the

colleges to hire physical education teachers. For instance, Chintamani stated, "seniors should protect juniors or their students. Is it not the duty of the subject committee to ensure job placement for graduates? This suggests that the expectations mismatch the actual authority of the seniors and the subject committee. The main duty of the subject committee is to develop the curriculum and facilitate academic activities. Senior professors can only suggest, but not dictate to any institutions.

Participants seemed to be more critical on senior faculty regarding the use of resources of the university. For instance, Nikunja mentioned, "seniors are doing "halimuhali" (getting all benefits), we have nothing". Echoing the same thought, Hareram added, "only seniors set questions for examinations, go for practical exam, make curriculum. They are responsible for destroying the PE subject". Findings indicate that guided by a misunderstanding of the real authority of seniors, the teachers who were working in the private/public colleges often condemned the seniors because their expectations were not fulfilled. However, the permanent teachers working at constitutional colleges regarded the senior professors, and they argued that the seniors are role models for them. Most of the participants seemed to be confused about who is supposed to help them in their careers. They argued that the dean's office should force colleges to hire only PE students as PE teachers.

Anxieties about Subject Merger and the Rise of Sports Science

PE has been run separately at the Master's level since 1996. However, health and physical education are still integrated at the bachelor's level. After 2017, the TU service commission opened separate advertisements for PE and health education teachers. The participants seemed happy with the separation of health and physical subjects. However, many were feared the possibility of subject merging again. Basmati

said that "I heard that health, physical, and population education are going to merge as one department. It is unacceptable for us." Highlighting a similar concern, Tirtha added, "the PE subject was separated after a long struggle. If it is merged with health education again, it will be devastating for us. It is an attack on all physical education teachers and students." Interestingly, participants who were also members of the subject committee reported that the merger was unfounded. This suggests that PE teachers were over-conscious of separation and afraid of subject merger. This might be because of two reasons: they think that they may lose their jobs, or they do not have the confidence to compete with health teachers. So, they have a nightmare of the merger.

PE teachers were found to be unhappy with the start of the sports science department under the TU. They perceived sports science as a competitor of PE. Bhaskar argued that "sports science is a 'sauta' (co-wives) for physical education teachers. Most of the teachers claimed that the sports science subject was introduced by the senior professors of PE. They further echoed that PE teachers should either raise their voices against sports science, or they should also be recognized as a part of the subject. In this regard, Kedar indicated that "sports science was not introduced by the university as per the need of the nation rather it is brought to fulfil the interest of a few persons, if not, then why does no one raise our issue?"

Participants were confused about the distinction between sports science and physical education, lacking a clear understanding that PE contributes to education whereas, sports science contributes to sports. Shova reported, "I heard that a sports university is going to be established. It would be more appropriate to open a physical education university not sports university, which may include both physical education program and sports activities." This confusion further reflects the blending of PE with sports-oriented

perspectives.

Discussion

This study examined university teachers' perspectives on PEP, focusing on how their views align with the intended purpose of PEP. The findings reveal a pervasive conceptual ambiguity among teachers regarding the purpose of PE, PA, and sports. Many participants emphasized that the main purpose of PEP is to prepare individuals for teaching, training, officiating, and coaching, while only a few emphasized its pedagogical and educational goals. These perceptions contrast with the primary goal (i.e., to prepare competent, pedagogically sound PE teachers for both school and higher education) of PEP under the FoE. This conceptual ambiguity reflects a lack of clarity about the academic and instructional purpose of PE. This finding is consistent with previous studies that highlight how stakeholders often misunderstand the broader pedagogical value of PE and, perceive it primarily as sport participation rather than a discipline for holistic learning and development (Freire et al., 2018; Green, 2008; Mordal-Moen & Green, 2014).

The findings indicate a gap between PE educators' perceptions and the intended academic direction of PEP. Although some participants recognized its educational dimension, many viewed it through a sport-centric lens emphasizing non-academic dimension. The present findings align with earlier studies, which indicate concerns that PE is often regarded as a non-academic or auxiliary subject among key stakeholders, including teachers (Kirk, 2009, 2013; Lawson, 2009). Together these findings reflect the undermining of the legitimacy of PE's purpose within higher education. This underscores the need to integrate content knowledge with pedagogical skills, aligning with the educational purpose of PE (Van Maarseveen et al., 2025). Moreover, Kirk (2009) argues that the academicization of PE teacher education has not necessarily

improved teacher preparedness and may even deepen the disconnect between theory and practice. This contradiction is reflected in the current findings, where participants remained divided between seeing PE as an academic discipline and as a pathway to sport-related professions.

The findings also underscore that confusion about the purpose of PEP led to the condemnation of seniors and the fear of subject merger. One potential reason for this may be that senior professors focus more on academic and pedagogical aspects, whereas the teachers, particularly those teaching in community and private colleges, tend to seek opportunities outside teaching. Another reason might be that these participants expected favors from senior professors, particularly in terms of administrative support; however, the professors' support remained limited the professional and academic areas. These mismatches between juniors' expectations and seniors' actions led to criticism of seniors by juniors. This does not align with the purpose of PEP, which aims to engage faculty members in professional, academic, and pedagogical activities to enhance pedagogical skills and content knowledge.

Participants expressed anxiety about the potential merger of PE with disciplines such as sports science or health education, fearing a loss of their existing jobs and identity within PEP. These findings point to ongoing debates surrounding the distinct identity of PE, particularly as it becomes increasingly integrated with other academic fields, raising concerns that it may lose its unique educational and pedagogical focus (Green, 2008). While interdisciplinary approaches have gained prominence in contemporary academia (Klaassen, 2018), a lack of clarity regarding the core competencies and educational aims of PE reinforces concerns about its potential dilution and marginalization.

The anxiety regarding subject merger further reflects significant confusion among teachers about the intended value of PE and

sports science. Many participants appeared unclear about the disciplinary boundaries between PE and sports science. They often mis-framed both disciplines, putting them in the same basket. This misinterpretation may lead to frustration and uncertainty among teachers about their future careers in the teaching profession. However, in the Nepali context, this confusion stems from a lack of proper understanding of the PEP purpose. According to the Education Act of Nepal (1971), individuals aspiring to become school teachers must possess a teaching license, which requires a background in education and formal pedagogical training. In contrast, graduates from sports science programs are not considered eligible for a teaching license, as they are assumed not to be trained in pedagogical skills (Nepal Law Commission, 1971). When teachers understand this fact clearly, they can overcome their anxiety regarding subject merger.

FoE has historically adopted an integrated approach to PE, in which health and physical education is combined at the bachelor's level. Nonetheless, participants' concerns indicate that the intended integrated or interdisciplinary model has not been adequately understood or effectively implemented in practice. This underscores the need to enhance collaboration across fields, rather than promoting competition between interrelated disciplines, through the orientation of prospective teachers during higher education.

The findings of the study suggest that the conceptual ambiguity surrounding the purpose of PE among teachers may stem from both limitations in the curriculum and challenges in its implementation. This indicates a need not only to review and potentially restructure the curriculum, but also to strengthen how its core purpose is communicated, interpreted, and enacted in practice. The curriculum should place greater emphasis on pedagogy rather than overloaded content, allowing students more opportunities for reflective practice

(Kennedy et al., 2015). Furthermore, pedagogy-driven, practice-based learning experiences should be prioritized to bridge the gap between theory and classroom practices, and to better reflect the central purpose of PE (Kennedy et al., 2015; Ward et al., 2023). Such reforms are essential to ensuring that PE is recognized not merely as a sport-related program, but as a rigorous academic and instructional discipline grounded in educational philosophies. Addressing these issues is crucial to align teacher education with the intended learning outcomes of PEP, particularly within resource-constrained and unique socio-educational context.

Conclusion

The present study explored university PE teachers' perspectives on PEP using a qualitative content analysis approach. The findings reveal a widespread conceptual ambiguity among teachers regarding the primary focus of PE with frequent overlap among the key concepts of PE, PA, and sports. This mis-framing of PE appears to shape much of their discourse, contributing to a sense of uncertainty about the core purpose of PEP. The findings further show how such conceptual ambiguity leads to tensions within the academic community, including criticism of senior teachers and a pervasive anxiety about the possible merge of distinct disciplines. The anxiety reflects a perceived threat to the academic identity of PEP as a unique field of study.

Overall, the study highlights a significant misalignment between current perceptions of PE educators, and the primary goal of PEP. Addressing this ambiguity calls for a multi-level response. First, there is a need to clarify the PE curriculum, with particular attention to articulating the aim, scope, and epistemological foundations of PEP to distinguish it from PE and sports. Second, targeted and periodic professional development trainings should be introduced to support university PE teachers in

developing a shared understanding of PEP, while paying particular attention to its educational and pedagogical dimensions. Finally, dialogue platforms within academic communities (e.g., workshops, seminars, and communities of practice) should be institutionally encouraged to reduce intergenerational tensions and build consensus around disciplinary focus and identity.

Limitations of the Study

This study relied on conversations in Facebook Messenger groups among university PE teachers. Such discussions may be more casual and less focused on the specific area of inquiry compared to formal, in-depth interviews with participants. This approach may have limited opportunities for the researcher to pose immediate follow-up questions to clarify and further explore key issues, which could have affected the richness of the data. Additionally, the study primarily reflects the perspectives of teachers who were active in the Messenger group, potentially limiting the inclusion of voices from those who were less engaged or less familiar with this technology.

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Availability of Data and Materials

The data used in this study are safely stored and available from the first author upon request.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in relation to this manuscript.

Ethical Compliance

This study involved human participants; however, no human biological data or tissue

was used. We declare that the study was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical standards.

Consent for Publication

"Not applicable"

Plagiarism and AI Use

The manuscript is free from plagiarism and improper use of AI-generated content. Any permitted use of AI tools (if applicable) was limited to language support and has not replaced original scholarly contribution.

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