

Analyzing the promotion of social skills and values in physical education texts and programmes



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ABSTRACT

Background: Global education systems increasingly emphasize holistic development by integrating social skills and ethical values into curricula, with physical education playing a central role in shaping students' cognitive, emotional, and civic competencies.

Objectives: This study examines how educational programs and policy documents promote social skills (e.g., empathy, communication, collaboration, autonomy) and ethical principles, with particular attention to the contribution of physical education in fostering academic achievement and responsible citizenship.

Methods: A structured literature review was conducted, applying predefined eligibility criteria and guided by socio-emotional learning and self-determination theory. Forty-five academic and institutional texts (published between 2013 and 2023), including frameworks from UNESCO and the Moroccan Ministry of Education, as well as programs such as PATHS and Second Step, were analyzed across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, with a primary focus on Morocco.

Results: Communication (11.11%; 5/45), autonomy (8.89%; 4/45), and cooperation (8.89%; 4/45) emerged as the most frequently emphasized competencies in both Moroccan and international curricula. Physical education was found to reinforce resilience, leadership, and collaborative skills, whereas empathy (4.44%; 2/45) remained underrepresented—reflecting the prevailing prioritization of technical rather than socio-emotional competencies. Implementation remains constrained by structural barriers, including limited resources and cultural misalignment, despite the legislative support of Morocco's framework law 51-17.

Conclusions: Embedding social skills within physical education supports students' holistic development. Achieving meaningful implementation requires: (1) short-term alignment of system-level policies and teacher training, and (2) long-term cultural adaptation of programs supported by measurable monitoring indicators.

Keywords: educational policy, physical education, social competencies, socio-emotional learning, analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

The promotion of social skills and ethical principles is essential for a holistic education, particularly in the context of physical education and studies (2000-2013). Education systems worldwide aim to develop cognitive abilities, emotional intelligence, and ethical responsibility (Burnett, 2023; UNESCO, 2014). It is increasingly essential to foster skills such as empathy, communication, collaboration, and self-regulation. These skills guarantee academic success and prepare students to become engaged citizens (Durlak et al., 2011). Research is increasingly focusing on integrating these skills into programs aimed at reinforcing social values (Levermore, 2011).

This article examines texts and programs designed to promote social skills and values in education. It examines theories, plans, and initiatives aimed at improving social skills, particularly in physical education (Suryadi et al., 2024). Sato et al. (2024) stated that skills such as autonomy, communication, teamwork, and compassion determine academic and emotional outcomes. These extend beyond academics, particularly in physical education, by integrating social-emotional growth with physical development (Zhang et al., 2025).

Durlak et al. (2011) stated that the theoretical underpinnings of social skills acquisition derive from key psychological and pedagogical models. Social-emotional learning targets self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationships, and principled decision-making (Durlak et al., 2011; UNESCO, 2014). It links improved social skills to emotional intelligence and values development. SEL programs enable students to manage complex socio-emotional challenges and promote responsibility (Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2019).

Programs such as PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) and Second Step, repeatedly cited in the literature (Durlak et al., 2011; UNESCO, 2014), incorporate structured modules for emotion management and conflict resolution. This standard reference underlines their relevance, but a diversification of examples (e.g., local Moroccan programs) would enrich the contextualization. Second Step integrates SEL with violence prevention, offering structured development of social skills (Durlak et al., 2011). Suryadi et al. (2024) stated that physical education offers numerous opportunities to strengthen social skills. It emphasizes camaraderie and cooperation through physical and mental challenges (Zhang et al., 2025). Sato et al. (2024) also stated that it builds physical resilience while fostering social skills, such as communication and leadership. Autonomy and decision-making in group activities reinforce confidence and social interaction.

Darnell (2011) suggests that Autonomy-Building programs in physical education are essential to the evolution of social ethics. Autonomy, according to self-determination theory, promotes intrinsic motivation and individual responsibility (Sarkar & Page, 2022). Børndal & Ronglan (2021) allow students to make educational choices, which reinforces self-efficacy and autonomy. This is essential for advancing social and emotional competencies (UNESCO, 2014). Structured programs and theoretical models emphasize the development of social skills in education worldwide. The American Common Core integrates SEL into core subjects, promoting communication and collaboration (Durlak et al., 2011). UNESCO's sustainable education framework emphasizes the importance of global citizenship and social responsibility. These frameworks prepare students for the

interpersonal and ethical complexities of the 21st century. Durlak et al.'s (2011) research on promoting social skills spans theoretical and practical perspectives. Despite evidence of the effectiveness of PATHS and Second Step, widespread implementation faces obstacles (Durlak et al., 2011; Njelesani, 2011). Limited time and resources for non-academic areas hinder integration. Cultural adaptation remains crucial due to varied values and teaching styles (Sheppard-Perkin et al., 2023).

Hayhurst (2011) also stated that the integration of socio-emotional skills into school curricula is sparking debate about the balance between academic and emotional priorities. Critics argue that socio-emotional learning can reduce academic rigor (O'Leary & Khoo, 2013). Others argue that emotional and social skills are essential for long-term success (Digennaro & Sannella, 2022). This balance remains a key issue for educational reform. Cultivating social skills in education, particularly physical education, is an essential and evolving field (Giulianotti, 2021). This article contributes to the scientific discourse by analyzing texts and programs. It explores theories, approaches, and barriers to developing social skills. Targeting these skills brings significant benefits to student outcomes and well-being (Zhang et al., 2025).

While studies have shown that there is a notable difference in the participation of students with special educational needs in sports and physical activities (Ben Rakaa et al., 2024b), as their classroom inclusions are significantly influenced by their teachers' perceptions and sense of pedagogical competence in inclusive physical education (Ben Rakaa et al., 2024c, 2024a). These extend beyond academics, particularly in physical education, by integrating social-emotional growth with physical development (Zhang et al., 2025). The theoretical underpinnings of social skills acquisition derive from key psychological and pedagogical models (Durlak et al., 2011). Social-emotional learning targets self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationships, and principled decision-making (Durlak et al., 2011). It links improved social skills to emotional intelligence and values development. SEL programs enable students to manage complex socio-emotional challenges and promote responsibility (Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2019).

Given the fragmented evidence across educational policy documents and academic literature, this study employs a *literature review* to provide a comprehensive and structured synthesis of the key social competencies and values embedded in physical education. By employing predefined eligibility criteria, a literature search strategy, and a transparent screening protocol, this review consolidates findings from multiple institutional and academic sources published between 2013 and 2023, enabling a rigorous and replicable examination of how social and ethical skills are addressed within physical education frameworks.

METHODS

Review Protocol

This study employed a literature review to synthesize academic publications, institutional frameworks, and educational policy documents addressing social competencies and ethical values in physical education. The review followed a predefined protocol consisting of sequential stages: (1) literature search, (2) eligibility screening, (3) full-text assessment, and (4) data extraction and synthesis. The protocol was designed to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and methodological rigor,

drawing on the established principles of literature reviews (Figure 1). The scope of the review covered literature published between 2013 and 2023 in English and French, focusing on studies and policy texts relevant to school-based physical education, socio-emotional competencies, and social values within both Moroccan and international educational contexts.

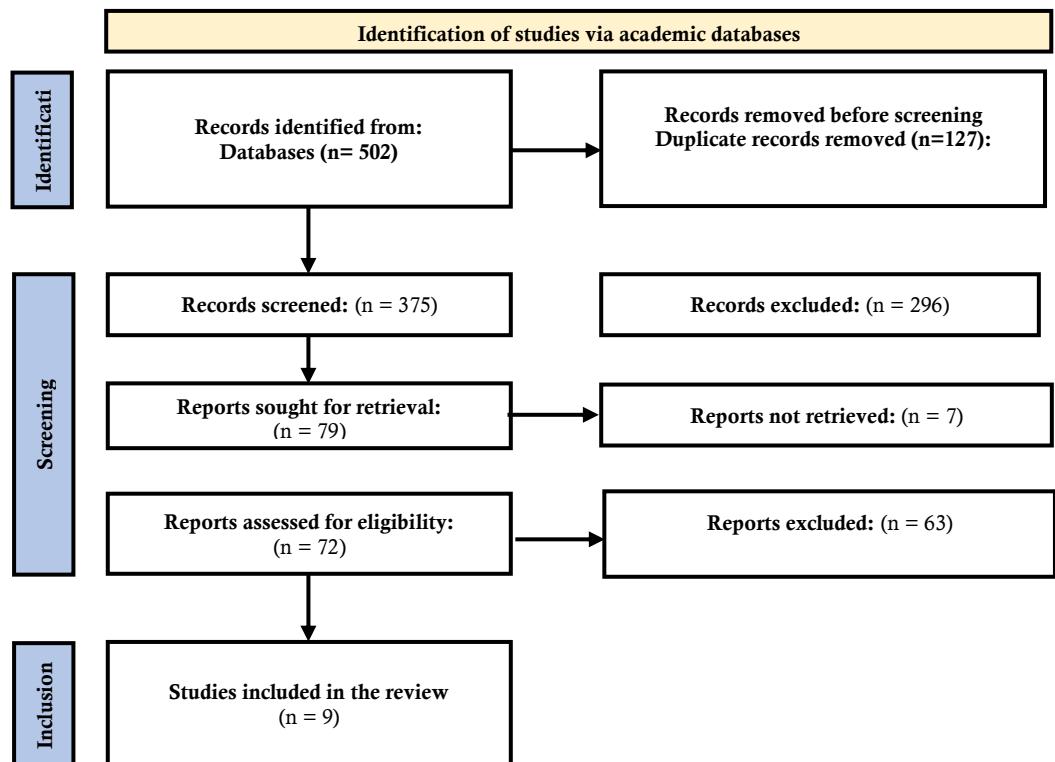


Figure 1. Flowchart of the programs review

Search Strategy

A literature search was conducted across three major academic databases—ERIC, Scopus, and Web of Science—to identify relevant texts. The search strategy used Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) and keyword combinations related to social competencies, physical education, educational policy, socio-emotional learning, cooperation, communication, autonomy, empathy, and values education. In addition to peer-reviewed literature, institutional frameworks from UNESCO, as well as national policy documents from the Moroccan Ministry of Education, were included. Programs specifically emphasizing socio-emotional learning, such as PATHS and Second Step, were also examined to enrich the comparative dimension of the review. Search parameters were restricted to documents published between 2013 and 2023 to align with the major policy reforms and curricular developments implemented during that period.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Eligibility criteria were defined prior to the review to ensure conceptual and methodological consistency. Documents were included if they met the following conditions: (1) addressed social or ethical competencies such as empathy, communication, cooperation, or autonomy; (2) demonstrated clear relevance to physical education or school-based instructional settings; (3) were published between 2013 and 2023; (4) were available in English or French; and (5) consisted of academic

publications, educational policies, institutional frameworks, or curricular guidelines. Conversely, exclusion criteria eliminated documents that: (1) lacked conceptual relevance to social competencies; (2) were unrelated to educational or physical education contexts; (3) fell outside the target publication period; (4) did not provide accessible full texts; or (5) represented promotional, non-academic, or non-institutional sources.

Study Selection Process

The study selection process involved two main screening phases. First, all retrieved documents were assessed through title and abstract screening to determine alignment with the inclusion criteria. Documents meeting these conditions proceeded to the full-text assessment stage, where eligibility was confirmed based on relevance to social skills, physical education, or educational policy frameworks. The screening process was recorded using a standardized reporting method, detailing the number of identified records, excluded publications, and final included documents. From the initial pool of records, 45 documents were retained for complete analysis, comprising academic publications, national policy documents (e.g., those from the Moroccan Ministry of Education), and international institutional frameworks (e.g., UNESCO, PATHS, Second Step).

Data Extraction

A structured data extraction grid was developed to ensure consistency across all sources. This grid captured essential information such as document type (academic, policy, or institutional), country or cultural context, reported social competencies (e.g., communication, autonomy, cooperation, empathy), associated ethical values, theoretical foundations (such as socio-emotional learning and self-determination theory), references to physical education or school-based curricular practice, as well as implementation challenges and broader systemic considerations. All data were extracted manually and subsequently organized into thematic categories. To strengthen reliability, the extracted information was cross-checked across multiple sources to ensure accuracy and consistency.

Ethical approval statement

Ethical approval was not required for this literature review as it relied solely on secondary sources and publicly accessible documents. No human participants, personal data, or sensitive information were involved.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

The analysis followed a mixed narrative–thematic synthesis approach. First, data were categorized according to recurrent social competencies and values emphasized across the documents. Second, conceptual categories were organized using socio-emotional learning (SEL) frameworks and self-determination theory (SDT) to interpret how competencies were addressed, justified, and operationalized. Quantitative descriptors (e.g., frequency of competency occurrence) were used to highlight curricular priorities—for example, communication (11.11%), autonomy (8.89%), and cooperation (8.89%). Cross-national and institutional comparisons were conducted to identify convergence or divergence between Moroccan educational policies and international frameworks. The final synthesis integrated descriptive results with theoretical interpretation, paying particular attention to

contextual constraints, including resource limitations, cultural alignment, and policy implementation challenges.

RESULTS

The analysis of the selected documents highlights a clear evolution in educational orientations within Morocco and comparable international contexts, reflecting an increasing emphasis on life skills and social competencies within physical education and broader school curricula. This shift demonstrates a strategic alignment between national reforms and international frameworks, particularly those promoted by UNESCO and global socio-emotional learning initiatives. Rather than focusing solely on academic achievement, the reviewed programs increasingly emphasize holistic student development, including personal growth, social integration, and future employability.

The quantitative mapping of competencies across the 45 documents provides insight into which social skills receive the most significant curricular emphasis. The distribution reveals several prevailing trends. Communication (11.11%) emerges as the most frequently referenced competency, underscoring its foundational role in interpersonal interaction and collaborative learning. Autonomy and cooperation (8.89% each) also appear prominently, suggesting an effort to cultivate learners who are both self-directed and capable of contributing effectively to group dynamics. Self-confidence and self-esteem (6.67% each) further indicate growing attention to psychological and emotional well-being as essential components of educational success (Figure 2).

By contrast, competencies such as empathy and group action (4.44% each) appear less frequently, pointing to potential gaps in the integration of emotional intelligence and social cohesion within existing curricula. Taken together, these findings support the objectives of this review: to identify the social competencies most emphasized in contemporary educational programs and to understand how they contribute to broader educational and societal goals. The emerging patterns reflect general consistency between policy intentions—such as promoting values, enhancing civic engagement, and supporting equitable development—and the competencies prioritized within the analyzed programs.

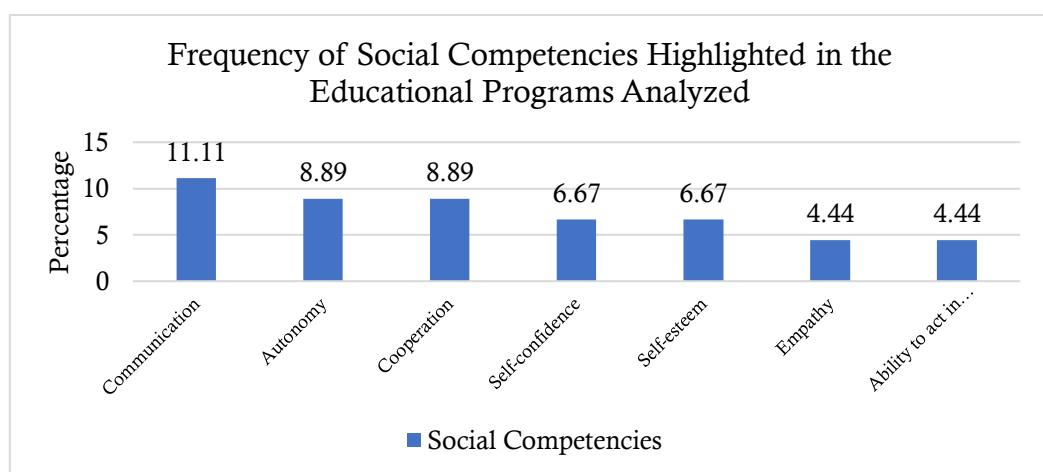


Figure 2. Frequency of social competencies highlighted in the educational programs analyzed

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of programmes and texts

Author(s), year	Article Title	Country/Organization	Participants	Sport practiced	Social skills
Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research 1999	The National Charter of Education and Training of the Kingdom of Morocco	Morocco	Stakeholders in the Moroccan education system, including students, teachers, administrators and society in general.	Global education, including physical and sports education, is included in the holistic approach to education.	Autonomy, mastery of thinking methods, leadership, community engagement, communication, cooperation, adaptation, problem solving
Ministry of National Education 2000-2013	The National Charter of Education and Training of the Kingdom of Morocco	Morocco	Educational institutions, teachers, students		Social inclusion, gender equality, citizenship, empowerment, fight against discrimination
Ministry of National Education 2019	Framework Law No. 51-17 relating to the education, training and research system	Morocco	Government, educational stakeholders, citizens		Empathy, autonomy, cooperation, resilience, emotion management, self-esteem, decision-making.
Ministry of National Education 2021	Life skills framework	Morocco	Primary school students		Social integration, employability, leadership, communication, teamwork, conflict resolution.
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), 2021	Sport for Development (S4D)	Germany/Africa	Youth, international partnerships	Targeted sports activities	Social inclusion, equal opportunities, empowerment, leadership, conflict management, adaptation, effective communication, civic engagement
UNESCO, 2023	Report on the implementation of the “Fit for Life” program	Global	UNESCO Member States, Youth, Sports Organizations	Physical Education and Sports (EPS)	Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, cooperation, negotiation, self-confidence, resilience.
Ministry of National Education (Morocco), 2022	2022-2026 Roadmap for a quality public school	Morocco	Students, teachers, families		Peace, social cohesion, infrastructure building, using sport for community development.
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), 2006-2024	Global Agenda: Sport and Development	Japan/Partner countries	Local staff, young people, institutions	Structured sports activities	Gender equality, citizenship, inclusion, fight against discrimination, social accountability.
NMD Thematic Notes Collection, 2021	NMD General Report on Life Skills and Respect for Human Rights	Morocco	Policy makers, educators, students		

Table 2. Synthesis of programmes and texts

Author(s), year	Objective	Methodology	Key Results	Conclusion	Added value of this study	Competencies processed
Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research 2000-2013	-Inclusive and quality education -Strengthen and enrich human capital -Enhanced social inclusion -Promotion of a resilient territory as an anchor	Evaluation on: Studies on governance and occupational integration Teacher surveys	Physical education and sport must be given the same importance and attention as other teaching disciplines	The lack of a specific assessment of the impact of PSE on social skills is a gap that needs to be filled. -Preparation of young people for working life, -Democratization of education and equality,	-Integral training of the learner: psychic, affective, cognitive, in force, artistic, social and physical development,	Autonomy. -Development of self-learning capacity -Mastery of luck knowledge for autonomy -Mastery of autonomous thinking and action methods Social development: Communication and expression skills, Cooperation and ability to work in teams, Human capacity for adaptation and continuous evolution, Develop leadership and community engagement
Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research 2019	Promotion of equality and quality in access to education. Provision of training to meet labour market requirements. Encourage citizenship and cosmopolitanism.	Conceptual analysis guided by the constitution and international conventions. Implementation from sector programs and reforms	The law guarantees universal and pre-installed access to education. Introduction of multilingualism and cross-tracking. Strengthening vocational education and research.	The document is a comprehensive roadmap to reform and harmonise the vision of the Moroccan education system. Inclusive quality education and teaching. The need for curriculum content integrates EPS and social skills acquisition	This law focuses on an inclusive and holistic approach to building responsible citizens.	The document explains that it is essential to integrate educational skills such as: -Promote inclusion -Develop citizenship -Encourage cooperation -Improve the well-being.
Ministry of National Education, Preschool and Sports Curriculum Directorate 2021	Educational programme with interactive activities and didactic scenarios.	Target population: Primary school students (boys and girls). Methods: Playful approaches: games, evaluation cards.	1. Acquisition of new skills through new pedagogical approaches 2. Strengthening the remaining key competencies: 3. Prospects: to continue and expand the programme to other cycles, improve the monitoring and evaluation system. 4. Empowerment 3. Increased student engagement and participation	1. Primary: "Modern life skills education is essential to solving the problems of today's education". 2. Limitations: need for cultural and contextual adaptation of activities 3. Prospects: to continue and expand the programme to other cycles, improve the monitoring and evaluation system. It is necessary to develop a reference framework including specific cognitive and social elements dedicated to PSE	The importance of life skills in school. 2. Important life skills to be taught 3. Dynamic training for empowerment and interaction 4. Empowerment approaches and interpersonal values are crucial.	Core Competencies -Empathy -Entente -Autonomy Skills for Life Development -Ability to act as a group -Motor cognitive skills

Continued from Table 2. Synthesis of programmes and texts

Author(s), year	Objective	Methodology	Key Results	Conclusion	Added value of this study	Competencies processed
Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research 2021	Establish legislative and regulatory foundations to sustain educational reforms. Strengthen the quality of education through governance, steering and evaluation mechanisms. Ensure equitable access to quality education for all.	Development and implementation of a legislative and regulatory plan. Establishment of follow-up structures: national and regional committees. Organizing mobilization and communication campaigns to raise awareness among stakeholders.	Adoption of the Framework Law 51-17 and preparation of 81 regulatory texts. Implementation of strengthened governance with regular monitoring of reforms. Creation of tools such as dashboards to measure progress.	The document of the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research of 2021 concludes on the importance of establishing legal and regulatory bases to ensure the sustainability of educational reforms. It highlights the need to strengthen quality education through governance, steering and evaluation mechanisms, while ensuring equitable access to quality education for all	Structuring a legislative and regulatory framework : This provides a solid basis for the continuous and sustainable implementation of educational reforms. Improving educational governance: By creating monitoring and evaluation tools such as dashboards, it allows for better management and adjustment of education policies. Promoting equity in education: By ensuring that all parties are informed and involved through engagement campaigns, the study contributes to a more inclusive and equitable education.	Autonomy: Development of the capacity for autonomous learning, mastery of methods of independent thinking and action. Social development: Communication and expression skills, cooperation and teamwork, ability to adapt and evolve, leadership development and community engagement.
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit "GIZ" 2021	Promote skills through sport. Create a field resource for coaches and educators.	Compilation of field-based sports exercises in Africa, supported by international and national partnerships and institutions ensuring a human rights approach to protect young people	Employability skills: good communication, teamwork, entrepreneurship Structured exercises to develop life skills Safe and inclusive environment for youth	Sport is an effective tool for the development of young people because it facilitates social integration and employment skills. S4D exercises can be used for developing Critical Analysis life skills. The S4D approach is consistent with the SDGs and improves social development. The method is based on clear exercises and a thorough discussion with participants. Issues in the discipline	Useful and informative document that shows how a new method can be used to improve employability among young people in Africa. However, more detailed efficacy data is acceptable	Basic social skills -Communication; -Teamwork; -Entrepreneurship; -Social development. Social skills for employability -Communication skills; -Teamwork skills; Entrepreneurial skills.

Continued from Table 2. Synthesis of programmes and texts

Author(s), year	Objective	Methodology	Key Results	Conclusion	Added value of this study	Competencies processed
Collection of NMD thematic notes, bets and projects 2021	Main: Promote a life skills and human rights education system. Secondary: Promote social inclusion, strengthen equal opportunities, prepare students to become responsible citizens.	Type of studyDiagnostic and strategic recommendations through thematic notes. Target population.Learners in the national education system. Methods Public policy analysis, needs assessment in education consultations with stakeholders	Educational programs to develop life skills. Human rights education in the school curriculum. Inclusive mechanisms to address inequalities and promote gender equality	Main Life skills and human rights education is important for the inclusive and equitable future of students. Limitations: Employment problems in rural areas and lack of human resources. Perspectives Education for all and levels of education, including teacher training. Application: Human rights in all curricula, school to encourage social competence, citizen clubs in education	The importance of life skills and social skills training for students' development. The need to promote gender equality and combat all forms of discrimination. The role of teachers and schools in educating children about human rights.	Ability to be socially inclusive and able to create social bonds; Territorial development skills and human capital skills.
Ministry of National Education, Preschool and Sports 2022	Ensure quality of basic learning. Doubling the rate of primary school students who master the fundamentals. Make compulsory schooling effective. Reduce school dropout by one third. Encourage student development:	The roadmap is based on a participatory approach with: +100,000 participants in the national consultations, including students, teachers and families. Analysis of data from national (PNEA) and international (PISA) assessments. Dialogue with various actors in the education system to identify major challenges and involved in extracurricular activities	Learning Stress: 70% of students do not master the program at the end of primary school. Ranking of Morocco in PISA evaluations: 77th out of 79 in mathematics.	The authors stress the urgency of moving from a reform that is focused on means to an impact-based reform. They emphasize the importance of strong governance and commitment from different stakeholders to deliver on the 12 commitments.	Specific training for happier students who benefit from soft skills acquisition.	Cognitive domain:(Get to know) -Creativity; Critical thinking; Problem solving. Instrumental (learning to do) field: Cooperation; Negotiation; Decision making ; Personal area: (learning to be): Communication; Self-management; Resilience; Self-confidence ; Self-esteem

Continued from Table 2. Synthesis of programmes and texts

Author(s), year	Objective	Methodology	Key Results	Conclusion	Added value of this study	Competencies processed
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Date of application « 2006-2024 »	Improving access to sport, training of healthy human resources through sport, promoting social inclusion and peace through sport	Implementation of sports programmes, training trainers and referees, building sports infrastructure, sending volunteers, international cooperation with local social capacity building	Sport is useful for solving personal development and peace issues. Sport is not only an activity to keep fit, but also to get people to be more socially active and solve extreme problems in their lives.	Sport can lead to a greater use of free time and an improvement in people's quality of life	The above can be done by: Physical education at school, Sports events, Extracurricular activities	Basic skills: The affirmation of self, The spirit of initiative, The capacity for cooperation, The control of emotions, Ability to achieve objectives Interpersonal skills: Mutual understanding, Ability to work in a group, Leadership skills, Effective social interaction And empowerment: The decision making, Independence, Self-confidence, Active social participation, The growth of skills
UNESCO 2023	Structuring and defining empowerment through sport and PSE as a strategy for social and economic development.	Global consultation with UNESCO member states and sport stakeholders. Analysis of data from youth empowerment pilot projects and impact assessments. Case studies on integrating and developing best practices for marginalized populations through sport.	PE and sport are an excellent source of social skills for youth. Creation of the Youth Acceleration Program (YAP), providing leadership and employability models and training. Increasing women's and girls' access to sport and activity integrates gender equality and reduces discrimination. Investment and development	The study provides specific guidance on the role of sport inclusion in youth development strategies. The report is relevant as a document for policy makers, educators and sports organizations.	The decisions developed in the document can be implemented as recommendations for education and sports policies.	Interpersonal skills Collaboration and teamwork Empathy and respect for diversity Conflict management and problem solving Personal skills Leadership and decision-making Self-confidence and self-esteem Emotional control and resilience Strategic and professional skills Adaptation and flexibility Effective communication

Table 3. Competencies Frequency (%) in the Programs

Competency	Frequency (%)
Communication	5 (11.11)
Autonomy	4 (8.89)
Cooperation	4 (8.89)
Ability to Act in a Group	2 (4.44)
Self-confidence	3 (6.67)
Self-esteem	3 (6.67)
Empathy	2 (4.44)

Table 3 presents the frequency of social competencies identified across the educational programs and policy documents included in the review. Communication emerges as the most frequently emphasized competency (11.11%), indicating its central role in fostering interpersonal interaction and collaborative learning within physical education and broader educational settings. Autonomy and cooperation follow with equal frequencies (8.89% each), reflecting curricular priorities that aim to develop learners capable of both independent functioning and effective participation in group activities.

Self-confidence and self-esteem, each appearing at a frequency of 6.67%, highlight an increasing acknowledgment of psychological and emotional well-being as integral to holistic student development. By contrast, competencies such as empathy and the ability to act in a group (each at 4.44%) are less prominently represented in the analyzed documents. This suggests potential gaps in the integration of emotional intelligence and social cohesion within current educational frameworks, indicating areas where curricula may benefit from a more explicit emphasis.

Overall, the distribution of competencies in **Table 3** reflects a pattern in which communication, autonomy, and cooperation constitute the primary focus of educational programs. In contrast, competencies associated with emotional awareness and collective action appear less frequently. These findings align with broader policy objectives emphasizing learner agency, interpersonal skills, and personal development, yet also point to opportunities for strengthening empathy-based and group-oriented competencies in future program designs.

DISCUSSION

This study highlights the emphasis placed by Moroccan educational and sporting initiatives on autonomy and social development, resonating with the priorities established by the [Ministry of National Education \(2013\)](#) to promote physical and sports education (PSE) as a means of promoting equity. These orientations align with the observations of [Burnett \(2023\)](#), who emphasizes the importance of leadership skills in sports governance and their applicability to educational contexts. However, our findings reveal a more systemic integration of these skills into Moroccan policies compared to Burnett's study, suggesting a proactive approach to developing autonomy and leadership in diverse demographic groups, including school-going girls ([Ministry of National Education, 2013](#)).

This divergence underscores the distinct potential of Moroccan initiatives to address gender disparities, a key issue in your research on basketball as a tool for female empowerment.

Complementing this, the emphasis on cooperation and group dynamics in our data is echoed in the work of [Suryadi et al. \(2024\)](#), who demonstrate that cooperative learning strategies in PES significantly improve social skills. This convergence

suggests a global consensus on the value of teamwork; however, our study is distinguished by its grounding in Moroccan legislative frameworks, notably Framework Law 51-17, which facilitates the deliberate integration of social skills into sports and educational programs (Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2021). In contrast to the broader contexts explored by Suryadi et al. (2024), our analysis focuses on how national policies influence pedagogical practices to promote gendered inclusion, a factor directly relevant to basketball programs designed to empower Moroccan girls in the face of socio-cultural barriers.

The emphasis on self-confidence and self-esteem in our results is corroborated by Sarkar & Page (2022), who associate these qualities with resilience in elite sports. Extending these observations to Moroccan educational contexts, our study suggests that self-confidence is essential not only for academic success but also for girls' personal development in disciplines such as basketball (Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2022). This perspective broadens the application of Sarkar and Page's work, arguing for pedagogical strategies that cultivate these qualities beyond athletic elites, in alignment with international recommendations for inclusive education (UNESCO, 2014). These findings reinforce your thesis argument that basketball can serve as a platform for developing assertiveness in girls and overcoming gender stereotypes.

However, the under-representation of empathy in our data, at just 4.44%, raises concerns similar to those expressed by Darnell (2011), who criticizes the lack of deep cultural engagement in sport for development programs. This low prioritization of empathy can be attributed to an excessive focus on measurable skills, such as leadership, to the detriment of the emotional dimensions essential to social cohesion (Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2021). In the Moroccan context, where cultural norms often value emotional restraint, particularly among girls, this gap limits social integration. To remedy this, strategies such as integrating guided reflection activities or empathy-based role-playing, inspired by Darnell's approaches, could be incorporated into PE and basketball programs. For example, team exercises that require girls to express and understand the perspectives of their teammates could reinforce this skill.

The Moroccan legislative framework, notably Framework Law 51-17, reflects the principles of inclusion championed by O'Leary & Khoo (2013) in their analysis of sports laws in South Africa and Malaysia. While these authors focus on anti-discriminatory frameworks, our study assesses the practical impact of these policies on the development of social skills, revealing a need for ongoing evaluation to ensure their effectiveness (Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2021). This nuance enriches the debate on policy implementation, emphasizing that laws alone are insufficient without rigorous monitoring, an observation relevant to basketball initiatives aimed at promoting gender equity in Morocco.

Despite the methodological robustness, several limitations need to be considered. The restriction to publications in English and French likely excluded relevant studies in Arabic, a language that is dominant in Moroccan educational research. This linguistic limitation may have omitted local cultural perspectives crucial to understanding gender dynamics in PES and sport, particularly basketball. Furthermore, the targeted publication period (2013-2023) overlooked earlier work that may be rich in theoretical or historical value, such as early Moroccan educational

reforms. Finally, the exclusive use of academic databases may have missed grey or unindexed sources, such as local NGO reports on women's sport. These constraints suggest the need to broaden the search criteria in future work by including multilingual sources and historical archives better to contextualize girls' empowerment initiatives in Moroccan sports settings.

Limitations of the study

This review is limited by the scope of available documents, as only texts published in English and French between 2013 and 2023 were included, which may exclude relevant sources in other languages. The analysis relied on institutional and academic documents that varied widely in structure and depth, potentially affecting the comparability of reported competencies. In addition, data extraction and synthesis were conducted manually, which may introduce subjective interpretation despite efforts to ensure consistency. Finally, the review focuses largely on the Moroccan context, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other educational systems.

CONCLUSIONS

This review highlights that communication, autonomy, and cooperation are the most emphasized social competencies across the analyzed educational and institutional documents. Physical education—particularly team-based sports—emerges as a key setting for strengthening these skills. In the Moroccan context, socio-cultural constraints, especially those affecting girls' participation, remain significant barriers. Strengthening policy alignment, updating curricular guidelines, and enhancing teacher training are essential steps for ensuring the sustainable integration of social competencies into educational practice. Overall, fostering these competencies through inclusive and sport-supported approaches can promote holistic student development and contribute to national efforts toward equity and empowerment.

DATA AVAILABILITY

All data supporting the findings of this study are included in the article and its supplementary materials. Additional datasets are available from the corresponding author upon a reasonable request.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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