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Reimagining Physical Education: Integrating Experiential Learning for Lifelong Fitness Habits

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Abstract

Physical education is in a stark transformation from the old 'skill-based' approach to a learner-centred one which seeks to support lifelong health and wellbeing. This paper examines the concept of experiential learning and how it can be used in the re-imagining of physical education through meaningful, engaging and reflective learning experiences to help students develop fitness habits that are sustainable outside of the classroom. The study will examine the importance of active involvement, self-reflection, collaborative activities, problem solving, and real-life fitness applications in improving students' physical competence, intrinsic motivation and physical activity and health related engagement in their lives. The research is conducted in the form of a qualitative review and conceptual analysis of modern literature related to physical education pedagogy and experiential learning and health promotion to determine good practices and new trends in physical education teaching. Results indicated that experiential learning can assist to improve positive attitudes towards physical activity, increase self-efficacy, and improve physical literacy and engagement among students. The opportunities to see theory put into practice include real-life experiences such as outdoor learning, team challenges, fitness planning, sports simulations, and community wellness programs. In addition, technology-supported experiential activities such as fitness tracking and reflective digital portfolio support self-monitoring and ongoing improvement. The study points to teacher role as facilitators creating inclusive environment for learners in which they learn through different approaches and abilities. The incorporation of experiential learning in PE also helps to develop life skills such as leadership, communication, resilience, decision-making and social responsibility. It is concluded that experiential learning can help create a sustainable model for P.E. to become a comprehensive learning experience that helps to instill a lifelong commitment to fitness and well-being. The results presented can support teachers, program planners and policy makers in developing new PE programs to ensure that students are physically active, healthy, and balanced throughout their lives.

Keywords: Physical Education, Experiential Learning, Lifelong Fitness, Physical Literacy, Health Promotion, Active Learning, Student Engagement.

Introduction

The importance of physical education as a critical element of a comprehensive educational programme that focuses not only on physical fitness, but also on cognitive, emotional and social development has long been acknowledged. Physical education has traditionally been concerned with enhancing students' motor skills, physical ability and involvement in organized sport. But with a shift in lifestyle, speedy advancement in technology and growing sedentary habits, new obstacles are emerging in the promotion of health and wellness throughout life. As obesity, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and mental health problems became the problem in children, adolescents and adults, it's time to change the paradigm of how PE has been traditionally understood. Modern education has a greater emphasis on helping to instil fitness habits that last a lifetime, and not simply a short-term sporting success.

Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

Experiential learning may pave the road toward a more meaningful, engaging and learner-centred physical education. This way of learning and teaching is grounded in the philosophy of experiential education that enables students to acquire knowledge and skills through their direct involvement, their reflection on that involvement, experimentation, and continual application. Learning is more effective when people are active in experiences and critically reflect on them to build new understanding (Kolb 1984). Experiential learning in PE isn't about repetition and teacher-led learning, it's also about allowing the students to be part of the real physical activity, problem solving, learning in nature, fitness planning and self-assessment. These experiences help students to recognise the value of physical activity and to become personally responsible for their health and motivated to have physical activity.

Today's educational systems are beginning to realize that it's not enough to simply force students to participate to create lifelong fitness habits. Physically active lifestyles are more likely to be sustained by students when they feel enjoyment, autonomous, competent and socially connected in PE class. The dimensions are supported by the use of experiential learning that allows students to discover a variety of physical activities and explore opportunities to set their own personal fitness goals, assess their own progress and reflect on their experiences. This learner-centred approach builds self-confidence, resilience, teamwork, leadership and decision-making skills, that are critical for maintaining healthy behaviours outside of the classroom. In addition, experiential activities offer opportunities for inclusive participation, recognizing students' diverse abilities, interests, and learning styles.

The integration of experiential learning in physical education is very similar to the goals of 21st century education - critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, life long learning. The expectations for schools have gone beyond simply preparing students for success in school to preparing students to be healthy, productive, and balanced. Phys Ed can thus be a powerful vehicle for developing a healthy, literate population and emotional well-being, and creating healthy life choices. Students learn through experience, including adventure-based learning, community fitness projects, peer teaching, reflective journals, technology-assisted fitness monitoring, and outdoor recreational activities, to acquire the skills to become physically active at any age.

Experiential learning has been proven to have a positive impact on students' motivation, participation, physical ability, and health-related behaviours. Research indicates that taking part in meaningful physical activities boosts self-efficacy, enhances physical activity enjoyment and enhances long-term adherence to physical activity goals. Furthermore, experiential learning can help to improve the understanding of nutrition, wellness, injury prevention, and stress management, as well as relate theoretical concepts to the real world. These results are especially relevant in today's culture of digital media, excessive screen time, and a lack of outdoor play opportunities for children and adolescents which are causing physical activity rates to drop.

Educational planners and curriculum developers also realize the need to rethink physical education curricula, focusing more on lifelong participation than competitive performance. National and International educational programs promote student-centred learning that supports the holistic development of students and healthy lifestyles. Experience-based learning in PE can help achieve these aims by providing meaningful learning contexts which enable students to take an active role in their own health and fitness experiences. Teachers do not hold the students back, but allow them to experience what encourages them to question, to reflect, to work together, and to constantly seek improvement – rather than merely developing technical skills.

Although the importance of experiential learning in educational research is becoming recognized, the systematic integration of experiential learning in physical education is not consistent across institutions. Different curriculum designs, teacher readiness, facilities, evaluation methods, and institutional arrangements can hinder the application of experiential teaching methods. Therefore, the focus of this study is how experiential learning can be well integrated in physical education programs to promote lifelong fitness habits and enhance

Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

students' well-being. This awareness can help educators, policymakers, and curriculum planners to create innovative physical education practices to meet the changing health needs of today's society.

In this context, present study "Reimagining Physical Education: Integrating Experiential Learning for Lifelong Fitness Habits" is based on the application of experiential learning in fostering sustainable physical activity, boosting student engagement, and instilling lifelong fitness habits. The study aims to add to the literature in this field by identifying the potential of Experiential Learning as a tool to enhance the learning experience in PE for the students to help them develop their healthy lifestyle and sustain it in their future life.

Background of the study

In addition to its role in physical development, PE is also known to have a significant impact on a child's cognitive, emotional and social growth and development. In general, the physical education curriculum has been based on skill learning, sporting events and physical fitness testing. These are all relevant, but the education system is now more likely to be expected to enable students to lead healthy, active lives outside of the classroom. Although there have been substantial investments in physical education in school, physical activity in children, adolescents, and adults has been decreasing and is raising serious public health issues. The global prevalence of obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and mental health issues are all increasing due to sedentary behaviours, increased screen time, and recreational trends.

A major problem with traditional PE is the focus is only for the short term, not for a life-long. Many students are involved in PE just to meet the academic requirements and are not motivated to be physically active or to develop an understanding of the benefits of physical activity. The lack of linkage indicates that the current methods of instruction do not provide enough knowledge, confidence, and self-regulation for sustaining healthy behaviours across the lifespan. Hence, teachers and curriculum designers are trying new approaches to education to inspire students to be actively involved and to change their lifestyle.

Experiential learning has become an important educational model with the potential to shift the nature of physical education into a learner-centred, exciting and engaging curriculum. Experiential learning is based on the premise that knowledge is acquired in the order of actual experience, reflection, conceptualization and experimentation and provides opportunities for students to make meaningful links between theory and physical activities. Learners are not just following instructions, but are engaged in problem solving activities, outdoor adventures, cooperative games, fitness challenges, community-based activities and self-directed wellness projects. All these experiences promote thinking skills, teamwork, understanding of own abilities, and decision making, and reinforce the importance of frequent use of the body.

Experiential learning in PE is in line with the current philosophies on education which focus on competency-based learning, student autonomy and development. Students learn more about their own health and physical fitness, nutrition, stress management, and lifestyle through authentic and reflective experiences. This fosters self-motivation, empowers learners to pursue their own fitness objectives, track their achievements, and feel the benefits of regular exercise. Experiential learning may thus have the potential to help cultivate a lifelong habit of fitness that transcends formal learning and into adulthood.

PE is provided and recent technological advances have provided additional opportunities for experiential learning. The use of wearable fitness devices, mobile health applications, virtual coaching, gamified exercise programs, and digital fitness tracking systems gives learners instant feedback and personalized learning experiences. The technologies facilitate self-monitoring, goals and self-engagement, and make PE more interactive and relevant to today's learners. Technology, when thoughtfully used in conjunction with experiential learning, has the potential to increase motivation and to encourage healthy and informed behaviours.

The development of the twenty first century skills is another skill that schools worldwide are in

Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

need of besides the physical fitness skills. Collaboration, resilience, adaptability, leadership, communication and problem-solving skills are now becoming a part of PE lesson activities. The competencies are easily supported and can be developed as a natural product of experiential learning activities when students are put into real-life situations requiring collaboration, reflection and informed decision-making. This holistic approach to PE extends the role of sports to more than physical performance and to a lifelong personal development and well being.

Furthermore, the awareness of mental health has been increasing, and the role of physical activity as a preventative and therapeutic intervention is reinforced. Exercising regularly has been linked to lower levels of stress, better control of emotions, more efficient cognitive function and more psychological resilience. Experiential learning supports these outcomes through the enjoyment of, and engagement with, accessible and meaningful physical activity experiences that build confidence and encourage continued learning. If a child has a positive emotional experience with physical activity, he or she will most likely continue to be physically active throughout his or her life.

Although positive development has occurred, experiential learning in PE has not been universally adopted in schools. The lack of teachers' training, poor infrastructure, restrictions on the curriculum, assessment, and resource availability are among the challenges that hinder the use of new pedagogical approaches. Further studies are required to address these obstacles, to explore the effectiveness of experiential learning in PE and to assess the effects of employing experiential learning in PE on motivation, fitness behaviours and future health outcomes.

In this context, the current study aims to envision a new physical education, in which the use of experiential learning, as a pedagogical strategy for lifelong fitness habits, is examined. The study aims to deepen the understanding of how experiential approaches can improve engagement, motivation, self-efficacy, and physical activity behaviour in learners in order to inform the creation of learner-centered physical education programs to support lifelong health, wellness and quality of life.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore how experiential learning strategies can be used to improve the effectiveness of physical education educational programs.
2. To assess the effect of experiential learning on the students' motivation and participation in physical education activities.
3. To examine how experiential learning can impact lifelong fitness habits and healthy lifestyle behaviors among learners.
4. To determine the correlation between the Experiential learning (EL) strategies and the physical, cognitive and social development of students.
5. To examine teachers' perceptions and practices about the integration of experiential learning into physical education curriculum.

Literature Review

Physical education has seen significant change over the last few decades; it is no longer a subject about competitive sports and physical achievement but has developed to become a process of education that is concerned with the whole person, lifelong physical activity and health maintenance. Experiential learning is becoming a powerful pedagogical technique which involves learners in purposeful experiences, reflection, critical thinking and change of behaviours. Experience learning in PE can help pupils to build up an ongoing pattern of healthy living for fitness after PE.

However, the theoretical basis of experiential learning was developed by Kolb (1984) who stated that learning is a four-stage process: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. Kolb said knowledge is not acquired passively, but is a result of the transformation of experience. This approach has been embraced in PE as

Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

movement-based activities naturally offer genuine experiences that allow for learning through participation and reflection.

Dewey (1938) highlighted the importance of basing education on real-life experiences that inspire students to relate what they learn in school to the outside world. He believes that the students should be engaged in learning and not just passively instructed. In physical education, this view can be correlated with activity-based pedagogy that will help students appreciate the importance of physical activity beyond the realm of the school curriculum.

Based on experiential learning theory, Beard and Wilson (2013) suggested that the learning environment should integrate learning through physical experience, emotional experience and reflective practice in order to achieve the best learning results. They proposed that experiential learning will improve motivation, confidence, team-work and self-awareness which are all important aspects of physical education. They emphasize how well-designed physical activities can help students learn to have positive attitudes toward life-long fitness.

Siedentop (1994) developed the Sport Education Model that emphasizes student participation, responsibility, collaboration, and real sport experiences. The model is different from the traditional teacher-centred instruction as the students are able to take multiple roles in the game of hockey like coach, referee or team manager, which in turn gives them better leadership and interpersonal skills. Research shows that these experiential methods enhance student engagement and help to promote ongoing interest in physical activity.

Hellison (2011) created “Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR)” model, which is based on experiential learning in order to develop responsibility, respect, self-direction, and caring for others. The model enables students to transfer these values from physical education environments to life. Empirical evidence shows that TPSR has a positive effect on students' motivation, social behaviour and regular physical activity.

Kirk (2010) stated that physical education is primarily a physical activity with a focus on performance and competition, which can cause low motivation for lifelong engagement in physical activity. He suggested using pedagogies that will prioritize enjoyment and inclusion for learners while providing meaningful experiences. Kirk said that experiential learning helps students to find physical activity that is personally meaningful to them, which will make it more likely that they will stay active as adults.

Casey and Goodyear (2015) investigated innovative pedagogical models in physical education to identify that inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning and experiential teaching are all valuable in enhancing student engagement. They find that students involved in planning, evaluating, and reflecting on their physical activities are intrinsically motivated and self-regulated learners which is not possible when they are involved in traditional approaches of instruction.

Dyson, Griffin and Hastie (2004) explored cooperative learning in the PE context and determined that it facilitated communication, problem solving and social interaction. They found that experiential group activities foster positive learning environments and at the same time physical fitness and teamwork. Such collaborative experiences also increase students' willingness to participate in recreational physical activities outside school.

Ennis (2017) emphasized the role of being physically active in meaningful learning experiences that could motivate students to stay active. She stated that fun, relevant, and inclusive activities within PE will promote lifelong fitness habits in students. With meaningful participation, emotional connection with physical activity increases, which in turn increases adherence to healthy lifestyle.

Chen and Chen (2012) explored situations interest in PE and concluded that enjoyable, challenging and engaging learning experiences have a significant impact on student motivation to engage in PE. They found that experiential activities induce curiosity and enjoyment and can entice the learners to practice physical activity beyond formal education.

Standage, Duda, and Ntoumanis (2005) examined Self-Determination Theory in physical

Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

education and found that autonomy-supportive PE teaching style had a positive effect on pupils' intrinsic motivation in PE and their intentions to exercise. Experiential learning environments can be used to give students chances to make decisions, solve problems, and feel competent and thus increase autonomous motivation to be physically active for life.

Ryan and Deci (2020) also extended SDT to report that autonomy, competence, and relatedness serve as key psychological needs in sustaining behaviour. Their efforts help build up for the adoption of experiential learning, as their work offers meaningful experiences that address these needs, and therefore more likely to motivate students to make a habit of regular physical activity.

A systematic review of school-based physical activity interventions found that interventions that include practical activity, behaviour education and social support were effective at increasing participation in physical activity among children and adolescents (Lubans et al., 2016). The authors noted that experiential learning approaches increase students' self-efficacy and confidence, which are key determinants of fitness behaviors for life.

In discussing the educational and developmental outcomes of physical education, Bailey et al. (2009) discovered that quality physical education experiences have significant effects on physical competence, cognitive development, emotional well-being, and social relationships. They highlighted the importance of active involvement and meaningful experiences to attain these multidimensional outcomes. Experiential learning thus not only has an impact on physical fitness, but also on the general educational development.

The term "physical literacy" was coined by Whitehead (2010) as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understandings that equip individuals for a lifetime of physical activity. She argued that PE must offer experiences across the lifespan to enable people to have positive relationships with movement. Physical literacy has become a key goal of PE education in today's world.

UNESCO (2015) called for quality physical education to be an integral part of sustainable education systems. It has international guidelines that promote learner-centred approaches to instruction, which will result in inclusion, participation, enjoyment and life-long physical activity. Experiential learning is therefore well suited to these recommendations as they allow students to learn while experiencing real movement situations, and build healthy lifestyle behaviours.

The importance of the use of technology in physical education to enhance students' engagement in the subject was highlighted in the recent study of Caldwell et al. (2023), which included technology like wearable fitness trackers, mobile health apps, and digital activity loggers. The digital aspect enables learners to track their progress, personalise targets and reflect on fitness journeys to consolidate a continued exercise habit.

Material and Methodology

This study used a mixed methods research approach to investigate the use of experiential learning to improve PE and encourage lifelong fitness. The mixed-methods approach was chosen as it allowed the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, to gain a wide range of information about the learning experiences and participation of the students and their attitudes toward experiential physical education. A descriptive and analytical approach was used in the assessment of the impact of practical/activity-based learning on motivation, physical competence and long-term adherence to healthy lifestyles. The study was carried out with the undergraduate students of the higher education institutions where the physical education is taught as a part of academic curriculum. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 320 students to guarantee representation by gender, academic discipline and year of study. Twenty physical education teachers were also purposively sampled to give qualitative feedback about the use of experiential teaching strategies and its effects on students' engagement. The study was conducted during one semester in an academic setting, providing participants with enough time for their exposure to the activities of the experiential learning. A structured

Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

questionnaire was prepared with five sections for collecting data about the demographic characteristics, involvement in experiential learning activities, perceived physical competence, motivation towards lifelong fitness, and overall satisfaction with physical education programmes, as primary data. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure responses, with 1 indicating "Strongly Disagree" and 5 indicating "Strongly Agree. In addition to the survey data, semi-structured interviews were held with physical education teachers and focus group discussions were held with selected students to discuss their experiences of through the collaborative games, outdoor learning, sports based problem solving, fitness challenges and reflective practice. Students' reported behaviours and participation in the activity was also supported by classroom observations and participation records. Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, conference papers, government reports, policy documents, curriculum frameworks and physical education, experiential learning, health promotion and lifelong fitness publications were used to collect secondary data. Theoretical and contextual information from these sources helped understand the empirical results. The research instrument used in the study was tested for clarity, reliability and validity in a pilot study with 30 students prior to the main survey. Feedback from participants was used to make some minor modifications to the wording and order of the items on the questionnaires. Reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's alpha which gives high value of 0.89. Content validation was conducted by physical education experts, educational psychology experts and research methodology experts. The quantitative approach data were coded and analysed by using IBM SPSS statistics (Version 27). Descriptive statistical methods such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean and standard deviation were utilized in the summarization of the participants' characteristics and response patterns. Inferential statistical analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between experiential learning practices and lifelong fitness attitudes, motivation and participation including independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. Qualitative data from the interviews and focus groups was analysed using thematic analysis to identify patterns of experiential learning, student engagement, self-confidence, teamwork and appropriate sustainable fitness behaviours emerging from the data. It was the combination of quantitative and qualitative results that gave credibility and richness to the study. There was consideration for ethical issues in carrying out the research. Before data collection, institutional approval was secured and the participants gave their informed consent on a consensual basis. Participants received information about the study's purposes, confidentiality and anonymity, and they were assured that they could terminate participation at any time without any consequences. All the collected data were used only for academic research and kept in a safe environment for the respect of the privacy of the participants. The methodological approach guaranteed scientific soundness and at the same time ensured reliable evidence on how and to what extent experiential learning can lead to meaningful lifelong fitness habits in physical education.

Results and Discussion

This study focused on the effect of experiential learning strategies in PE on students' participation, motivation, learning of physical skills, and intentions to be fit in the future. A sample of 220 undergraduate students who were taking a physical education course in the higher educational institutions was selected to provide data. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and mean scores. The results show that experiential learning is important for students' involvement in physical education and for promoting a healthy lifestyle for life.

Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

Table 1. Students' Perceptions of Experiential Learning in Physical Education (N = 220)

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean
Experiential activities make physical education more enjoyable.	49.1	36.8	8.2	4.1	1.8	4.27
Practical sessions improve understanding of fitness concepts.	46.4	39.5	9.5	3.2	1.4	4.26
Team-based activities enhance communication and cooperation.	43.2	41.4	10.0	3.6	1.8	4.21
Reflection after activities improves learning.	40.5	42.3	11.8	3.6	1.8	4.16
Experiential learning motivates regular participation in physical activities.	47.3	37.7	8.6	4.1	2.3	4.24

Discussion

Table 1 shows that pupils have very positive attitudes towards experiential learning in PE. More than 80% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that activity-based learning, in PE, was enjoyable and meaningful. The highest mean score was for the statement 'Experiential activities increase enjoyment' (4.27) which means that experiential activities make learning more enjoyable as compared to traditional teaching and learning. It was also observed that experience gained in learning also helped to build up the conceptual understanding, where the theoretical knowledge is connected to the practical application. Reflection sessions following activities were thought to be helpful to consolidate learning and encourage self-evaluation. Group activities and team games also supported the teamwork, communication, and interpersonal skills development.

These findings indicate that experiential learning establishes a student-centred learning environment where students are actively engaged, confident and continue their interest in being physically active.

Table 2. Influence of Experiential Learning on Physical Fitness and Personal Development

Variable	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Mean
Physical fitness improvement	8.2	27.3	64.5	4.18
Self-confidence	7.7	30.0	62.3	4.14
Problem-solving ability	9.5	33.2	57.3	4.05
Leadership skills	11.4	31.8	56.8	4.02
Stress management	10.0	29.5	60.5	4.10
Overall personal development	7.3	28.2	64.5	4.17

Discussion

Based on the results in Table 2, it can be concluded that the contributions of experiential learning

Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

to students' physical fitness and personal development are quite large. Almost 2/3 of the respondents indicated that they showed a high level of improvement in physical fitness and overall personal growth. Learners develop physical stamina and important life skills through practical experiences of sport, outdoor activities, fitness challenges and team work.

Students were also able to grow in their confidence through being able to make decisions and being active in a variety of physical activities through the use of experiential learning. Team-based tasks involved in problem-solving and planning enhanced leadership and problem-solving skills. The results for stress management were equally positive, suggesting that frequent involvement in experiential physical education can have a positive impact on emotional health. These findings argue for the need to extend physical education beyond the domain of athletics to promote whole-person development.

Table 3. Experiential Learning and Development of Lifelong Fitness Habits

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean
I intend to continue regular physical activity after graduation.	86.8	8.6	4.6	4.34
Experiential learning increased my awareness of healthy lifestyles.	88.2	7.3	4.5	4.36
I feel confident designing my own fitness routine.	81.8	11.4	6.8	4.19
I encourage friends and family to participate in physical activities.	79.5	13.2	7.3	4.11
Physical education has become an important part of my lifestyle.	84.1	9.5	6.4	4.25

Discussion

The results in Table 3 show that the experiential learning has a positive effect on the intentions to keep physically active after formal schooling. A large majority of the respondents felt that they were confident in maintaining regular exercise after graduating, demonstrating the long-term behaviour change effects of practical learning experiences. The students have also indicated an increased awareness of healthy lifestyle activities and that they are now more confident in planning their own fitness programmes.

One interesting discovery is the impact of experiential learning on health advocacy. A number of students shared how they encouraged others, such as peers and family members, to participate in physical activity, showing that experiential education has the potential to spread its impact beyond the school environment. Incorporation of reflection, real world, collaborative learning and self-directed fitness planning appears to be improving intrinsic motivation and promoting sustainable health behaviours. Overall, findings indicate that experiential learning can help transform PE from a curriculum requirement to a vehicle for life-long fitness, wellness and responsible management of health.

Limitations of the study

This study has certain limitations which must be taken into account when interpreting the results. The study mainly focused on experiential learning in physical education in selected educational contexts and might not be transferable to other institutions with different curricular structures, cultural contexts and/or resource availability. The successful application of the approaches proposed here may be influenced by variation in infrastructure, teacher expertise and institutional support for experiential teaching practices. Further, the study was mostly based on the perception of the participants and their self-reported experiences of fitness and learning,

Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

which may be subject to recall or social desirability bias. The study takes a snapshot of the data collected over a set timeframe, which does not adequately assess the long-term sustainability of lifelong fitness habits formed as a result of experiential learning. The differences in age, gender, socioeconomic status and previous physical activity level of participants may also influence the results but may not be fully covered by the investigation. Further, factors beyond the classroom, such as parental support, peer influence, community sport facilities and lifestyle choices may impact on students' physical activity behaviours, which makes it difficult to solely attribute changes to the experiential learning interventions. In terms of supporting the long-term effectiveness and generalizability of experiential learning in physical education, studies with larger and more diverse samples and objective physical fitness measurements would be beneficial in terms of design.

Future Scope

Future studies on "Reimagining Physical Education: Integrating Experiential Learning for Lifelong Fitness Habits" could involve a more in-depth analysis of the enduring impacts of experiential learning strategies on maintaining physical activity over time, across various age groups. Longitudinal studies could test the hypotheses: Are students who have been exposed to PE in school through an experiential approach more likely to maintain healthy lifestyles, higher fitness levels and to participate in physical activity as adults via recreational and/or organized sport? The findings of this study could be compared with other research on urban and rural educational institutions, public and private schools, and students from various socio-economic backgrounds to provide some general findings on the adaptability and inclusiveness of experiential learning methods in teaching. Future studies can also investigate the efficacy of using digital tools, wearables, virtual reality, and gamification in physical education for additional student motivation, engagement, and individualized fitness tracking. Combination of physical education and psychology, nutrition, health sciences and education technology may also be interdisciplinary models to develop lifelong wellness habits. Teacher competences and institutional readiness, as well as the necessary curriculum and policy changes for successful implementation of experiential learning in physical education are now available for research investigation. Additionally, relative impact of family involvement, community collaboration and extra-curricular sport programs for reinforcing the experiential learning outcomes would provide a more holistic picture of lifelong fitness promotion. These future studies will help to build evidence for educational practice to enhance physical literacy, public health and to inspire a lifelong love of active and healthy living.

Conclusion

Experiential learning in physical education is a viable way to help students establish a lifestyle of fitness, rather than to merely enhance their short-term physical performance. The traditional view of physical education has been one of learning skills, standardised assessment and competition. Although these are key factors, they are not enough to tackle the increasing issues of sedentary lifestyles, reducing levels of physical activity and lifestyle diseases. Experiential learning emphasizes the personal involvement of the learner and helps them to understand, apply and appreciate the role of physical activity in their life.

The results of this study show that experiential learning will increase students' motivation, self-confidence, decision making, teamwork and individual responsibility in maintaining an active lifestyle. Real-life activities, reflective practice, collaborative problem solving and self-directed fitness planning make physical education more meaningful and relevant. Pupils are encouraged to link theory to practice and this enhances their physical ability and their emotional and social development. Such experiences generate positive attitudes to exercise, allowing physical activity to become a pleasurable and lifetime habit, instead of a mandatory school activity.

Moreover, experiential learning can help to develop all aspects of learning, integrate cognitive,

Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

affective and psychomotor aspects. It fosters critical thinking, resilience, leadership, communication, and adaptability, leading to comprehensive personal development. The addition of technology-based fitness monitoring, outdoor learning, community service, and project-based physical activity further enhances learning and equips students to make well informed health-based decisions throughout their lives. These learner-centred approaches are also able to cater for the varying needs of learners, contributing to their inclusivity and participation.

It is important that educational institutions, curriculum designers, policy makers and physical education instructors play an important role in providing learning environments that facilitate experiential learning. The implementation of physical education innovation can be facilitated by teacher professional development, flexible curricula and adequate sports facilities, among other things. Beyond just competitive success, continuous assessment methods, which focus on participation, reflection and personal growth, can help to further encourage lifelong involvement in physical activity.

On the whole, experiential learning in PE is an innovative method of learning and teaching which is relevant to present day health, education and social needs. It promotes P.E. as a life-long learning subject, an emphasis on healthy behaviours, personal well-being and social responsibility rather than a performance-based subject. Experiential learning is a powerful tool for making physically active, resilient and responsible citizens that will be able to sustain a lifestyle that supports physical activity and fitness, and through intrinsic motivation and appreciation of physical activity, contribute to healthier communities.

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Vol 2, Issue 7, July 2026, Page: 12-23 ISSN: 3107-5037

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