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THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF PHYSICAL LITERACY IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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Abstract/Izvleček The National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care of Croatia reflects contemporary educational values. Physical literacy is a key concept connecting the body, learning, and well-being. This paper determines the presence and conceptualization of physical literacy within the National Curriculum's goals. Through a thematic analysis of forty-one definitions, a set of core curriculum-related concepts was identified. The results indicate a discrepancy between the curriculum and internationally accepted dimensions of physical literacy. The findings highlight the need for a clearer conceptual foundation in national strategic documents to effectively support the lifelong health and development of children.

Tematska analiza gibalne pismenosti v Nacionalnem kurikulumu za zgodnje otroštvo ter predšolsko vzgojo in izobraževanje v Republiki Hrvaški
Nacionalni kurikulum za zgodnje otroštvo ter predšolsko vzgojo in izobraževanje Republike Hrvaške odraža sodobne izobraževalne vrednote. Gibalna pismenost je ključni koncept za razumevanje odnosa med telesom, učenjem in dobrobitjo. Cilj prispevka je ugotoviti prisotnost in načine konceptualizacije gibalne pismenosti znotraj ciljev tega kurikuluma. S tematsko analizo 41 definicij gibalne pismenosti je bil opredeljen nabor s kurikulumom povezanih konceptov. Rezultati nakazujejo na neskladje z mednarodno sprejetimi dimenzijami gibalne pismenosti. Ugotovitve poudarjajo potrebo po jasnejši konceptualni podlagi v kurikulumu z namenom krepitve vseživljenjskega zdravja in razvoja otroka.

Keywords:
physical literacy, national curriculum, early and preschool education, thematic analysis, child well-being.

Ključne besede:
gibalna pismenost, nacionalni kurikulum, zgodnja in predšolska vzgoja, tematska analiza, dobrobit otroka.

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Introduction

In modern educational systems, the physical dimension of development is increasingly seen as part of personal identity, experience, and learning (Bailey et al., 2023). Physical literacy is a construct encompassing motivation, self-confidence, physical competence, and knowledge of physical activity (IPLA, 2016; Carl et al., 2022). Contemporary approaches view the child as a being learning through experience and interaction (Whitehead, 2010; Kirk, 2010). It is important to distinguish the notion of physical literacy from the terms physical activity and physical education. Physical activity refers to any form of a child's spontaneous or directed movement which is expressed and developed through play and everyday experience, without the necessary pedagogical structure. Physical education, on the other hand, represents an organized educational process within the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care by which the preschool teacher consciously and systematically encourages the integral development of the child (motor, cognitive, emotional, and social), using physical movement as an educational tool. Physical activity is a natural expression of a child's being, while physical education is a deliberate pedagogical stimulus that shapes this experience for the purpose of integral development and learning. Within the framework of physical literacy, both elements complement each other: physical activity forms the experiential basis, and physical education forms the educational framework for its meaningful development. The philosophical basis of physical literacy is especially developed in the work of Margaret Whitehead, who bases the concept on a monistic and phenomenological understanding of human existence. The monistic approach rejects the dualistic separation of body and mind and assumes that man develops and acts as an integrated whole. The phenomenological perspective further emphasizes that learning and development arise through embodied experience, that is, through an active relationship between the body, space, other people, and the world. In the context of early childhood education and care, this is especially important because children learn not only through cognitive acquisition of content, but also through movement, play, sensory experience, interaction, and exploration of the environment (Vujičić, Peić and Petrić, 2020). Therefore, physical literacy represents a suitable theoretical framework for the analysis of the curriculum viewing the child as an active, complete, and competent being. This concept is particularly important in early childhood, contributing to the development of social skills, emotional regulation, and cognitive abilities (Barnett et al., 2023; Cairney et al., 2019;

Keegan et al., 2019). Despite growing interest, its implementation in national curricula remains uneven (Dudley, 2021). This gap points to the need to analyse how physical literacy is integrated into national curricula. In Croatia, the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care (NCECEC) of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (2015) adopts a holistic view of the child as an active participant in learning (Petrović-Sočo, 2009; Slunjski, 2011). Consequently, the aim of this paper is to analyse the representation and integration of the dimensions of physical literacy in the NCECEC.

Methodology

The research is based on a qualitative research approach with the aim of a deeper understanding of how the dimensions of physical literacy are integrated into the goals and values of the NCECEC. The qualitative approach was chosen for its suitability for analysing meanings, patterns, and interpretations within textual documents, allowing insight into the implicit and explicit structures of curricular content. Thematic analysis was used as the basic method, which enables systematic identification, organization, and interpretation of patterns of meaning within the analysed document (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2013). The method is particularly suitable for this research because it enables the connection of theoretical concepts with theoretical content, while thematic analysis combines inductive and deductive approaches, which ensures a theoretically guided and empirically based interpretation of data (Braun et al., 2016; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Braun and Clarke, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017).

Aim of the research

The aim of this research is to determine the presence and ways of conceptualization of physical literacy within the goals and values of the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care. Conceptualization refers to the way in which physical literacy is theoretically understood and grounded, and how the dimensions of physical literacy are implicitly or explicitly structured in the goals and values of the NCECEC.

Specific objectives

Specific objectives include identifying the direct and implicit presence of the concept of physical literacy in the curriculum, identifying concepts and expressions related

to physical literacy, analysing the role of curriculum objectives and values in its integration, and identifying the dominant thematic patterns and the level of integration of physical literacy dimensions in the curriculum. Therefore, the primary objective of this qualitative analysis is to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent and in what way are the dimensions of physical literacy integrated into the goals and values of the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care of the Republic of Croatia?
2. In what way are the dimensions of physical literacy implicitly integrated into the goals and values of the curriculum, especially in the context of a holistic approach to child development?
3. To what extent is there consistency between the international definitions of physical literacy and the terminology used in the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care of the Republic of Croatia (2015)?

Sample

The primary source of data in this research is the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care of the Republic of Croatia (2015). The analysis focuses on the objectives and values of the document. The document was chosen for its normative role in defining the educational system in the early and preschool context, as well as for its relevance for researching the integration of contemporary educational concepts.

Procedure

The data analysis was carried out through six phases of thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2021) adapted to the main goal and research objectives, where in the first phase, special attention was paid to the identification of concepts that can be associated with the concept of physical literacy using the definitions of physical literacy according to Bailey et al. (2023).

Table 1

Identified Definitions of Physical Literacy According to Bailey et al. (2023) Sorted by Year; Interpretation by the Authors of this Paper.

Source	Definition of Physical Literacy

1.	Morrison (1969)	A person should be creative, imaginative, and clear in expressive movement, competent and effective in utilitarian movement, and inventive, versatile, and skilled in objective movement.
2.	Penney & Chandler (2000)	Focus on knowledge, skills and understanding related to body awareness, development, and expression, as well as enjoyment of a wide range of physical activities.
3.	Whitehead (2001)	A person moves with grace, economy, and confidence in various physically demanding situations.
4.	UK Sports (2002)	The ABCs of agility, balance, coordination, and speed.
5.	Whitehead (2007)	Motivation, self-confidence, physical competence, understanding and knowledge to maintain physical activity throughout life.
6.	Higgs et al. (2008)	Development of basic motor and sports skills that allow the child to move with control and safety in a wide range of physical activities, rhythmic (dance) and sports situations. It also includes the ability to recognize situations in the physical environment and react appropriately.
7.	Mandigo et al. (2009)	Physically literate people move with competence and confidence in various physical activities that contribute to the overall development of the person.
8.	Whitehead (2010)	Holistic involvement, which encompasses bodily abilities related to perception, experience, memory, prediction, and decision-making.
9.	Canadian Sport for Life (2010)	Basic motor and sports skills are the basic building blocks of physical literacy.
10.	Higgs (2010)	A repertoire of physical skills.
11.	Lloyd (2011)	The general characteristics of a physically literate person are movement with grace, economy, and self-confidence in various physically demanding situations.
12.	National Association for Sport and Physical Education (2013)	The totality of skills, knowledge and attitudes that are acquired in physical education and at the same time the basic goal of this area.
13.	Leidl (2013)	Giving students the physical skills, cognitive knowledge, and emotional confidence to become physically literate.
14.	Dowens et al. (2013)	The acquisition and development of a series of motor skills and qualities that support the child to move with competence and confidence in a wide range of physical activities that will benefit his physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development.
15.	Tompsett et al. (2014)	Competent movement in different environments and contexts, the ability to use one's own physical potential, motivation, and self-confidence to participate in regular physical activity.
16.	Sport Wales (2014)	A person who possesses technical skills, but also self-confidence and motivation to participate in various sports and physical activities at all stages of life.
17.	SHAPE America (2014)	It encompasses three domains of physical education (psychomotor, cognitive, and affective) and includes not only physical competence and knowledge, but also attitudes, motivation, and social and psychological skills necessary for the development of physical literacy.

18.	Castelli et al. (2014)	An attitude that establishes physical activity as an integral part of everyday life.
19.	Ennis (2015)	It includes not only the knowledge to perform, but also the ability to apply knowledge and use it innovatively.
20.	Aspen Institute (2015)	Ability, self-confidence, and desire for physical activity throughout life.
21.	Chen (2015)	Appropriate motor skills for certain types of physical activity, an appropriate level of fitness for effective participation and permanent motivation to continue the effort.
22.	Castelli et al. (2015)	A physically literate person embodies a physically active lifestyle. People who are physically literate have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to lead a healthy lifestyle and to help others acquire these skills.
23.	Dudley (2015)	A broad concept that encompasses the knowledge, skills, understanding, and values associated with taking responsibility for purposeful physical activity and human movement throughout life, regardless of physical or psychological limitations.
24.	Jurbala (2015)	Dynamic communication between the embodied self and the physical environment, which constantly integrates perceptual reading and appropriate responses to bodily challenges.
25.	Francis et al. (2016)	Attributes, characteristics, skills, and behaviours associated with the capacity for and commitment to a healthy, active lifestyle.
26.	PHE Canada (2016)	A journey where children and young people, but also everyone else, develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to participate in various activities.
27.	Richards (2016)	A lifelong process that includes the acquisition of basic driving skills and knowledge, attitudes and motivation that facilitate safe movement.
28.	Allan et al. (2017)	Physically literate people maintain self-awareness that encourages moral behaviour and meaningful connections with others in the context of physical activity.
29.	Edwards et al. (2017)	At the same time, consideration of competence in physical skills, self-confidence, motivation for physical activities and evaluation of movement and interaction with the physical world.
30.	International Physical Literacy Association (2017)	Motivation, self-confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to evaluate and take responsibility for participating in physical activities throughout life.
31.	Tremblay et al. (2018)	Motivation, self-confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to take responsibility for physical activity throughout life.
32.	Keegan et al. (2019)	Physical literacy is lifelong holistic learning acquired and applied in the context of movement and physical activity. It reflects continuous changes that integrate physical, psychological, cognitive, and social abilities.
33.	Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence (2019)	Mastering basic motor and sports skills that allow the child to understand his environment and make appropriate decisions, allowing him to be safe and in control in different physical activities.

34. Sport Australia (2019)	Development of skills, knowledge, and behaviours necessary to lead an active lifestyle.
35. Holler et al. (2019)	A holistic concept consisting of five interconnected areas: physical activity, attitude towards an active lifestyle, motivation to exercise, exercise knowledge, and self-confidence/self-efficacy in exercise.
36. Cairney et al. (2019)	Competence in motor skills, perceived motor competence, motivation, enjoyment of physical activity and self-knowledge related to health.
37. Cornish et al. (2020)	A holistic basis for participating in physical activity.
38. Melby et al. (2022)	A multidimensional concept that provides a holistic understanding of movement and physical activity. It contains affective, physical, and cognitive dimensions.
39. Ryo et al. (2022)	A comprehensive concept that includes components such as knowledge, understanding, motivation, self-efficacy, and physical abilities in relation to physical activity.
40. Santos et al. (2022)	Striving to develop and express personally appropriate qualities, taking into account one's own capacities and historical, cultural, and social circumstances.
41. SHAPE America (n.d.)	Ability, self-confidence, and desire for physical activity throughout life.

Note: All definitions listed in this table are cited as reported in Bailey et al. (2023). The original sources were not directly consulted and are therefore not included in the separate reference list.

Key terms and expressions related to the dimensions of physical literacy were identified. The coding was conducted using a combination of a deductive approach, based on the definitions of physical literacy and an inductive approach, which enabled the recognition of new patterns within the text. The codes were then grouped into broader thematic units that reflect patterns of meaning within the curriculum. Since the coding was conducted by one researcher, the interrater reliability was not assessed, but reliability was ensured by alternative approaches. For this purpose, the audit trail method was applied. All steps in the thematic analysis were documented in detail, from the initial coding to the formation of the final themes, to make the process transparent and verifiable. Internal coding consistency was also conducted, which confirmed the consistency of interpretations. At the end of the analysis, the thematic units and their meaning in relation to the goals of the curriculum were clearly defined. In addition to the thematic analysis, an analysis of the frequency of terms related to physical literacy was also conducted. The aim of this analysis was to quantitatively assess the frequency of occurrence of key terms in the goals and values of the curriculum and to identify potential differences between the implicit and explicit presence of certain dimensions of physical literacy. In the first phase of the analysis, all definitions of physical literacy analysed and included in the review paper by Bailey et al. (2023) were read multiple times to identify recurring

concepts, expressions, and semantic patterns. Based on the terms that explicitly appeared in the definitions (physical activity, movement, motor skills, competences, knowledge, understanding, motivation, self-confidence, emotionality, and wholeness), the initial codes were obtained. The resulting codes were grouped into broader categories, which were organised into final thematic units in the next step. Three criteria were applied in the formation of the final topics: the frequency of occurrence of a particular concept, its connection with internationally recognized dimensions of physical literacy, and the interpretive relevance for analysis of the goals and values of the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care of the Republic of Croatia.

Table 2
Initial Codes, Categories and Final Thematic Units

INITIAL CODES	CATEGORIES	FINAL THEMATIC UNIT
Physical activity, moving, movement, motor skills	Physical dimension, activity, motor action	Physical and motor dimension of physical literacy
Knowledge, understanding, awareness, decision making	Cognitive processing, understanding, application of knowledge	Cognitive dimension of physical literacy
Motivation, confidence, enjoyment, desire	Motivation, self-confidence, positive attitude towards activity	Affective motivational dimension
Social skills, responsibility, inclusion, interaction	Social inclusion, responsibility, relationships	Social and value-based dimension
Holistic development, embodiment, lifelong process	Wholeness, embodied learning, lifelong development	Holistic paradigm of physical literacy

Based on the coding process, five analytical dimensions of physical literacy were operationalised: physical/motor, cognitive/affective/motivational, social/value-based, and holistic. These dimensions served as the analytical framework for examining how physical literacy is represented and conceptualised in the aims and values of the NCECEC. The results presented in Table 2 indicate that five basic thematic units can be formed from the initial codes extracted from the definitions of physical literacy. Such a structure confirms that physical literacy is not exclusively a construct related to movement and motor skills. The resulting thematic units complement each other, thus forming a comprehensive analytical framework for examining the representation of physical literacy in the early childhood and care curriculum. Two analytical concept levels were distinguished in this paper. The first included core concepts derived from international definitions of physical literacy.

The second level included an expanded set of curriculum-related concepts identified in the analysis of the aims and values of the NCECEC. The expanded set included additional semantically related concepts that appeared in the curriculum discourse and helped to interpret the implicit presence of physical literacy. Therefore, the figures do not represent contradictory datasets, but two complementary levels of analysis: the theoretical level of physical literacy definitions and the curricular level of aims and values.

Frequency analysis

The frequency analysis was conducted on the Croatian original version of the NCECEC, while the results are reported in English. Different grammatical forms of the same word were grouped under the same conceptual category. To avoid overlapping and artificial inflation of frequencies, *skill* and *skills* were treated as one category, while *movement*, *motion* and *mobility* were interpreted according to their semantic context.

Results and Discussion

Table 3 shows the results of curriculum analysis through defined categories, providing insight into the manner and level of integration of the concept of physical literacy into goals and values.

Table 3

Direct Use of the Concept of Physical literacy in the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care of the Republic of Croatia (2015)

The presence of the concept of physical literacy	It is not used directly.
Expressions related to corporeality	Physical and health area, body as a whole, body expression, movement, and health
Role in curriculum objectives	The importance of movement, health, and physical expression for the development of the child is recognized
Links to the EU's key competences	Implicitly present through domains such as health, personal development, communication
Value framework	The child's right to development, equality, inclusion, individualization
Integration with other areas	Integrated with emotional, social, cognitive, and communicative development
Dominant theme (code)	Holistic development
Integration Level (High/Medium/Low)	Medium

Philosophical ethical implications	The body is understood as an instrument of expression, health, and relationships with others; It's associated with freedom.

The results indicate that the concept of physical literacy in the NCECEC does not appear explicitly, but is present implicitly through concepts related to movement, health, and physical expression. Corporeality is recognized as an important part of the child's overall development, but without a clear conceptual elaboration, which indicates partial operationalisation. This is in line with the results of Dudley (2015) that highlight similar patterns in curricula. The findings of this study agree with contemporary theoretical models of physical literacy, which define it as a multidimensional construct. The implicit presence of physical literacy in the NCECEC corresponds to Whitehead's holistic understanding of the concept. This finding is also consistent with Cairney et al. (2019) who emphasize the interaction between physical competence, motivation, confidence, knowledge and behaviour, as well with Dudley (2021) who points to the need for clearer curricular integration of physical literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning, health and sustainable development.

Integration is achieved indirectly through the domains of health, personal development, and communication, while the value framework shows compliance with the philosophy of physical literacy. The strong connection with other development areas confirms the holistic approach but also contributes to the implicitness of the concept. The curriculum supports the principles of physical literacy, but the lack of an explicit framework limits its systematic application. Table 4 presents the key thematic units identified through the grouping of codes, where physical literacy is integrated into the curriculum objectives.

In the analysis of thematic units, the focus on the holistic development of the child dominates, where the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions are interconnected and complementary. Physical literacy is manifested through the development of physical and emotional competences, experiential learning based on movement and play, and through social inclusion and value development. The emphasis on individualization points to the recognition and satisfaction of developmental needs for each child. This arrangement of thematic units confirms that physical literacy is integrated into various aspects of the curriculum, but predominantly on an implicit and integrative level.

Table 4

Key thematic units

1. Holistic development of the child	This thematic unit encompasses an integrated approach to child development, in which the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions are interconnected. Terms such as wholeness, integration, identity, and self-confidence indicate the strong presence of a holistic approach.
2. Physical and emotional competence	The thematic unit refers to the development of motor skills, physical safety, and emotional stability. The emphasis is on self-confidence, independence, and a positive attitude towards one's own body, which corresponds to the affective and physical dimension of physical literacy.
3. Active and experiential learning	This thematic unit connects physical activity with learning processes. Movement and play are recognized as key forms of experiential learning, through which the child develops knowledge, creativity, and initiative.
4. Social inclusion and values	The emphasis in this thematic unit is on the development of social competences, empathy, tolerance, and togetherness. Physical activity in this context plays the role of a means of social interaction and cooperation.
5. Individualization and development of potential	This thematic unit emphasizes the importance of adapting the educational process to the individual needs and developmental possibilities of the child. Physical literacy is manifested through the encouragement of personal progress and the development of potential.

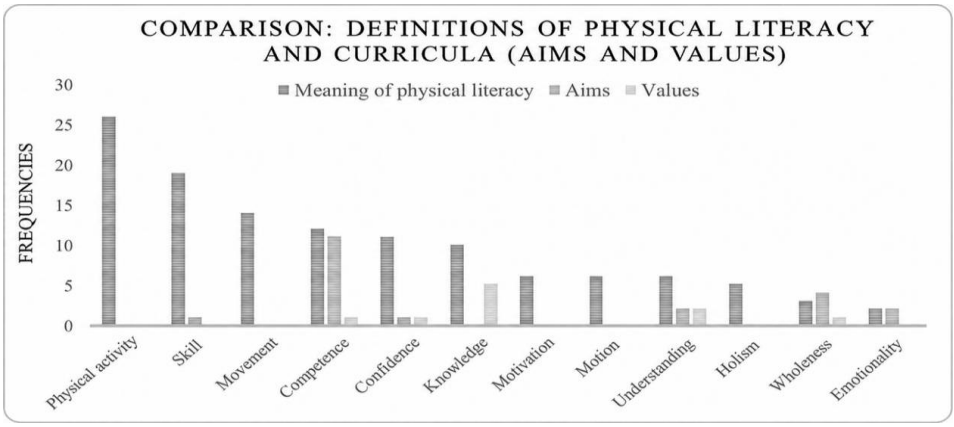
In this study, frequency analysis was not used as an independent indicator of conceptual importance, but as a supplementary analytical procedure in relation to thematic analysis. Frequencies were interpreted within the semantic context where the terms appear in the curriculum. For example, the concept of *competence* in the curriculum aims does not always directly refer to physical competence, but more often reflects a broader developmental and educational framework. In contrast, terms related to movement and physical activity occur less frequently, but they remain conceptually important because they indicate potential points of connection between the curriculum and the dimensions of physical literacy. For this reason, the results of the frequency analysis should be interpreted with caution. A higher frequency of a term does not necessarily indicate stronger conceptual operationalization, just as a lower frequency does not exclude its importance within the implicit structure of the curriculum.

Figure 1 shows a comparison of the terms related to physical literacy in the definitions of physical literacy with the goals and values of the NCECEC.

A comparison of the frequency analysis of terms related to physical literacy indicates significant differences in the representation of individual dimensions of physical literacy in the NCECEC. The highest overall representation was recorded for the

terms *physical activity* (N = 26), *competence* (N = 24), and *skills* (N = 20), which indicates that emphasis was placed on functional and general development competences in the definitions of physical literacy. Terms related to the physical dimension (*physical activity, moving, movement*) mainly appear in the theoretical framework of physical literacy, while they are almost completely omitted in the goals and values of the NCECEC.

Figure 1
Comparison of Concepts Related to Physical Literacy in the Definitions, Goals and Values of the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education of the Republic of Croatia (2015)



The term *competence* shows a relatively balanced representation in all categories, especially in goals (N = 11), which gives it a key role in curricular discourse. Concepts such as *knowledge*, *understanding* and *self-confidence* are also present, but with a more pronounced representation in the value and general developmental context than in direct connection with physical activity. Terms such as *motivation*, *movement* and *holism* appear less frequently, while *emotionality* is the least represented (N = 4). The results indicate an uneven distribution of concepts, which confirms the asymmetry between the theoretical framework of physical literacy and its concrete representation in the goals and values of the NCECEC.

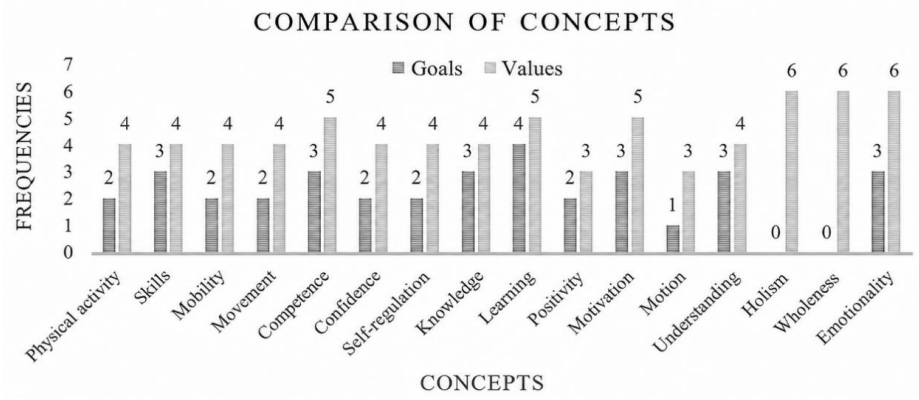
Figure 2 shows a comparison of the concepts related to physical literacy in the goals and values of the NCECEC.

The comparison of concepts shows the differences in the representation of concepts related to physical literacy between the goals and values of the curriculum, and the results obtained show that the concepts are more often represented in values than in goals. The most represented goals are *learning* (N = 4), *competence*, *knowledge,*

motivation and *understanding* (N = 3), indicating that emphasis is placed on the development of general competences and learning processes.

Figure 2

Comparison of Concepts Related to Physical Literacy in the Goals and Values of the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education of the Republic of Croatia (2015)



In contrast, terms related to the physical dimension such as *moving*, *movement* and *physical activity* have a lower representation. The concepts of *holism*, *wholeness,* and *emotionality* (N = 6), as well as *learning*, *motivation* and *competence* (N = 5) dominate the values, which confirms the orientation of the curriculum towards a holistic and value-based approach to child development. The pattern in which the concepts related to physical activity and movement are less represented indicates a mismatch between the declarative emphasis on holistic development and its concrete operationalisation in goals.

Conclusion

The thematic and frequency analysis of the NCECEC indicates that the concept of physical literacy is present in the curriculum, but it is implicit and insufficiently operationalized. The curriculum is based on modern pedagogical principles that emphasize the holistic development of the child, active learning, and the experiential dimension of the educational process. However, the basic components of physical literacy are not clearly and systematically integrated into its goals and values. The results show a discrepancy between the theoretical framework of physical literacy

and its representation in the curriculum. While theoretical definitions of physical literacy emphasize terms related to *physical activity*, *movement* and *motor skills*, their presence in the curriculum is limited. On the contrary, the greater representation of concepts such as *competence*, *knowledge*, *self-confidence,* and *emotional development* indicates the predominance of the cognitive-affective dimension of the curriculum. The holistic orientation of the curriculum enables the recognition of the basic principles of physical literacy, but the absence of an explicit conceptual framework makes it difficult to apply it consistently in educational practice. The present research is based on thematic analysis, which includes a certain amount of subjectivity in the interpretation of the results. It should be emphasized that frequency analysis has limited interpretive power, since the frequency of occurrence of a particular term does not necessarily reflect its actual conceptual importance within the curriculum. For this reason, frequencies in this study were used as a supplementary indicator, while thematic analysis enabled a deeper understanding of semantic patterns and the implicit presence of physical literacy. Despite the limitations, the combination of thematic analysis and frequency analysis provides a comprehensive and methodologically based insight into the way the dimensions of physical literacy are integrated and provides a reliable basis for further interpretation and discussion. Future research could expand the analysis to other parts of the curriculum, include comparisons with curricula from other countries and strengthen interpretative reliability through multiple coders or validation of the codebook. The NCECEC supports the Physical Literacy Value Framework but does not ensure its clear and balanced implementation. Therefore, there is a need for a more precise definition of physical literacy and its more systematic inclusion in curricular goals and values, which would strengthen the role of physical activity as an integral part of lifelong learning, health and well-being.

Author Contribution Statement

Conceptualization and methodology: T. B.; A. Č. Ž. and I. B., data collection and analysis: T. B.; A. Č. Ž.; writing – original draft preparation: T. B.; I. B.; writing – review and editing: T. B.; A. Č. Ž. and I. B.. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The article is based on archival or other non-digitalized sources listed in the references.

Statement on the Use of Generative AI Tools

No generative AI tools were used to generate text, data, code, analysis, interpretation, or visual content in the preparation of this paper. All content within this contribution is the result of the authors' own scientific and professional work.

Informed Consent Statement

All research participants were adequately informed about the purpose of the research prior to participation and provided informed consent to participate.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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