



Students' Perceptions of PATHFIT Teachers' Competence and Their Role in Student Learning Outcomes

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between students' perceptions of PATHFIT teachers' professional competence and student learning outcomes in tertiary physical education. The researcher utilized a descriptive-correlational design. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select respondents from five higher education institutions, with a total sample of 380 students from a population of 4,892 PATHFIT 1 enrollees. Data were collected using a validated survey questionnaire. Instrument reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha Test. Statistical analysis included descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation to determine the strength and direction of relationships among variables. The findings revealed that teacher professional competence across seven domains was perceived as very high, while student outcomes in engagement, skill development, and professionalism were rated high. Significant positive relationships were found between teacher competence and all three student outcomes, indicating that higher levels of teacher competence were associated with better student engagement, improved skill development, and stronger professionalism. The results signify that Teacher competence is a significant predictor of holistic PATHFIT student outcomes.

Keywords: PATHFIT 1, physical education, skill development, student engagement, teacher competence

Introduction

Teacher competence is a critical determinant of how students experience learning, particularly in performance-based subjects such as physical education (PE). In tertiary PE, teachers are expected to integrate content knowledge, pedagogy, communication, assessment, adaptability, and professional values to facilitate effective learning. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that quality PE contributes to physical literacy, lifelong health, and student well-being. However, despite these goals, student participation in PE classes often remains inconsistent, with many learners demonstrating only moderate levels of engagement and motivation (Vasconcellos et al., 2020). This raises concerns about how effectively teaching practices translate into meaningful student learning experiences.

In the Philippines, the implementation of the Physical Activity Towards Health and Fitness (PATHFIT) program under the Commission on Higher Education CMO No. 39, series of 2021, positions PE as a core general education requirement in higher education. Specifically, PATHFIT 1 focuses on Movement Competency Training, aiming to develop students' fundamental movement skills, physical fitness, and confidence in performing physical activities. A recent empirical study by Dato (2025) found that limitations in teachers' instructional practices—particularly the insufficient use of modern and student-centered strategies—were significantly associated with lower levels of student motivation and performance. These findings provide localized evidence that inadequacies in teacher competence can directly undermine students' engagement in PE, thereby reinforcing the need for sustained professional development to enhance instructional effectiveness and promote active participation. This suggests that the effectiveness of PATHFIT 1 is not solely dependent on curriculum design but also on how teachers deliver instruction and engage students in the learning process.



Teacher professional competence in PE is inherently multidimensional and directly linked to student outcomes. Research shows that effective communication and feedback enhance student motivation (Koka & Hein, 2020), while overall teacher competence predicts student engagement in physical education settings (Liu et al., 2021). In addition, structured instruction and adaptive teaching strategies are essential for developing movement skills (Barnett et al., 2021), and teachers' professional behavior influences students' discipline and social responsibility (Bailey et al., 2021). These findings indicate that different domains of teacher competence collectively shape students' engagement in learning, their ability to develop movement skills, and the formation of professionalism in PE contexts

Despite these insights, there remains limited research that examines how multiple domains of teacher professional competence simultaneously influence student engagement, skill development, and professionalism in tertiary physical education, particularly within PATHFIT 1. Tagare et al. (2025) reported that student engagement in PATHFIT is generally moderate, indicating inconsistencies in participation and learning experience. Similarly, Yagong and Chavez (2025) examined motivational factors influencing student participation but did not account for teacher competence as a multidimensional construct. This gap highlights the need for a more integrated and student-centered investigation of teaching effectiveness in PATHFIT 1. By focusing on students' perceptions, the study provides a targeted and student-centered evaluation of teaching effectiveness in tertiary PE. Aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4: *Quality Education*, the findings are expected to inform instructional practices, guide professional development, and enhance the implementation of PATHFIT 1, ensuring that PE in higher education becomes more responsive and outcome-driven to the evolving needs of PATHFIT students.

Statement of the Problem

The main problem of this study is to comprehensively investigate students' perceptions of PATHFIT teachers' competence across various critical domains in tertiary education, and to determine how these perceptions influence student engagement, skill development, and professionalism.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent is the competence of PATHFIT teachers demonstrated in terms of:
 - 1.1. content knowledge;
 - 1.2. pedagogical skills;
 - 1.3. professional attitudes and values;
 - 1.4. communication skills;
 - 1.5. assessment and evaluation skills;
 - 1.6. adaptability and innovation; and
 - 1.7. lifelong learning and professional growth?
2. What is the level of student learning outcomes in terms of the following:
 - 2.1. engagement in PATHFIT classes;
 - 2.2. skill development in PATHFIT activities; and
 - 2.3. professionalism cultivated through PATHFIT?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' competence and the students' level of:
 - 3.1. engagement in PATHFIT classes;
 - 3.2. skill development in PATHFIT activities; and
 - 3.3. professionalism cultivated through PATHFIT?

Statement of the Null Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the teachers' competence and the students' level of engagement in PATHFIT classes, skill development in PATHFIT activities, and professionalism cultivated through PATHFIT.

Literature Review

This section critically reviews existing literature and empirical studies on the relationship between students' perceptions of PATHFIT teachers' competence and student learning outcomes.



PATHFIT Program in the Philippine Context. The Physical Activity Toward Health and Fitness (PATHFIT) program, institutionalized through Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 39, s. 2021, serves as the national tertiary Physical Education framework in the Philippines. It promotes physical literacy, lifelong fitness, movement competence, and holistic wellness through outcomes-based instruction (Commission on Higher Education, 2021). PATHFIT 1 specifically focuses on movement competency training designed to develop foundational motor skills, confidence, and participation in physical activity. Recent Philippine studies confirm the effectiveness of PATHFIT implementation. Sinio and Tolentino (2024) reported that tertiary PE implementation in Pampanga was highly aligned with CHED and UNESCO quality standards. Dimarucot et al. (2024) found significant improvements in health-related fitness outcomes after structured PATHFIT participation. These findings indicate that PATHFIT can improve student wellness when properly implemented. However, most existing studies focus on program effectiveness rather than instructional mechanisms. Limited evidence explains how teacher competence influences engagement, skill acquisition, and character outcomes. This gap justifies examining teacher competence as a key factor in PATHFIT success. Existing evidence supports PATHFIT as an effective tertiary PE reform, but localized research remains limited regarding how multidimensional teacher competence shapes student learning outcomes.

Professional competence of PATHFIT teachers. Teacher competence refers to the integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors required for effective instruction. In Physical Education, competence extends beyond content mastery to include pedagogy, communication, motivation, assessment, adaptability, and professionalism (Budiartha & Riandi, 2022). The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (Department of Education, 2017) emphasize content knowledge, pedagogy, assessment, and professional values, all of which are directly relevant to PATHFIT delivery. For this study, teacher competence is framed through seven domains: content knowledge, pedagogical skills, professional attitudes and values, communication skills, assessment and evaluation skills, adaptability and innovation, and lifelong learning and professional growth. Teacher competence is multidimensional and central to quality PATHFIT implementation. Students' perceptions of these competencies may strongly influence their learning experiences and outcomes.

Content knowledge. Content knowledge is fundamental in PATHFIT because teachers must explain movement principles, exercise science, anatomy, and wellness concepts accurately. Strong content knowledge allows teachers to connect theory with practical performance. Ward et al. (2021) found that teachers who integrate subject knowledge with demonstrations significantly improve student understanding and performance. González-Calvo et al. (2022) also noted that contextualized instruction enhances retention and engagement. However, research suggests that content knowledge alone is insufficient unless paired with effective pedagogy and communication. Content knowledge remains foundational, but its educational value depends on how effectively teachers translate knowledge into meaningful learning experiences.

Pedagogical skills. Pedagogical competence refers to the ability to organize instruction, demonstrate skills, manage learning progression, and apply varied teaching strategies. This is especially important in PATHFIT 1, where students learn foundational movement patterns. Renshaw et al. (2020) emphasized that instructional environments aligned with learner ability improve motor skill acquisition. Casey and MacPhail (2021) found that varied teaching approaches improve inclusivity and student outcomes. These findings align with Motor Learning Theory, which states that beginners require structured guidance, repetition, and feedback. Pedagogical competence is a major determinant of skill learning, engagement, and inclusive instruction in PATHFIT settings.

Professional attitudes and values. Professionalism includes fairness, punctuality, ethical behavior, respect, responsibility, and positive role modeling. In activity-based classes such as PATHFIT, teacher behavior significantly shapes student attitudes and classroom culture. Bailey et al. (2021) emphasized that PE provides a strong environment for character formation through guided interaction and teamwork. Teachers who model professionalism may influence students' discipline, respect, and responsibility. Licudine (2024) likewise identified teacher professionalism as a major factor affecting student engagement and attitudes in PE. Professionalism is both an instructional competency and a modeling mechanism that contributes to student behavioral development.



Communication skills. Communication skills include clear instruction, feedback delivery, listening, motivation, and interpersonal interaction. In PATHFIT, communication is critical for safety, skill execution, and engagement. González-Fernández et al. (2024) found that structured and interactive communication improves understanding and participation. Leleka et al. (2024) and Cocca et al. (2023) reported that empathy and supportive interaction increase motivation, while negative communication reduces engagement. Koka and Hein (2020) found that teacher feedback significantly predicts intrinsic motivation in PE. Leisterer and Jekauc (2021) also reported that feedback quality affects emotional experiences and skill development. Philippine studies suggest that students' value interactive and adaptive communication, especially among Generation Z learners (Tagare et al., 2026; Bermundo, 2025). Communication competence strongly influences motivation, participation, learning clarity, and students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness.

Assessment and evaluation skills. Assessment competence involves monitoring progress, evaluating performance fairly, and using feedback to support improvement. In PATHFIT, assessment should reflect skill performance, participation, and learning growth. López-Pastor et al. (2020) emphasized that formative assessment promotes autonomy, engagement, and continuous improvement. Zach et al. (2025) highlighted a shift toward authentic and performance-based assessment. Leleka et al. (2024) noted that digital tools improve feedback efficiency. Philippine studies found inconsistencies in assessment transparency and feedback quality despite generally strong instructional competence (Bermundo, 2025; Sinio & Tolentino, 2024). Effective assessment practices improve motivation and learning, but localized evidence suggests continued need for stronger feedback systems in tertiary PE.

Adaptability and innovation. Adaptability refers to adjusting instruction based on learner needs, context, facilities, and changing environments. Innovation includes using creative methods, technology, and learner-centered strategies. Zach et al. (2025) found that adaptive teaching supports continuity of learning in changing environments. Chen et al. (2023) and Leleka et al. (2024) reported that technology integration improves participation and learning experience. Philippine studies encourage PE programs to move beyond rigid traditional instruction toward contextualized and flexible learning models (Tagare et al., 2025; Sinio & Tolentino, 2024). However, innovation remains constrained by teacher readiness and resources (Bimmuyag, 2024). Adaptability and innovation are increasingly essential competencies for responsive and engaging PATHFIT instruction.

Lifelong learning and professional growth. Continuous professional development enables teachers to remain effective amid evolving standards, technologies, and student needs. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) found that sustained professional development improves teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. Wang (2024) highlighted the role of reflection and collaborative growth in strengthening professional identity. In the Philippine context, continuing professional development is essential for sustaining teacher quality (Elic, 2024). Sinio and Tolentino (2024) and Bimmuyag (2024) recommended graduate studies and specialized PE training. Teacher competence is sustained through lifelong learning, making professional growth essential for long-term PATHFIT quality.

Engagement in PATHFIT classes. Student engagement includes behavioral participation, emotional involvement, and cognitive investment in learning. High engagement predicts stronger learning outcomes. Drugău et al. (2022) found that positive PE perceptions increase satisfaction and participation. Longakit et al. (2024) and Simón-Chico et al. (2023) reported that game-based and collaborative instruction improve engagement. Martín-Rodríguez and Madrigal-Cerezo (2025) and Zhang et al. (2025) found that technology-enhanced PE sustains participation. Philippine studies reported only moderate PATHFIT engagement, suggesting inconsistency in learning experience (Tagare et al., 2025). Yagong and Chavez (2025) also found moderate exercise self-efficacy despite high motivation. Student engagement in PATHFIT is not automatic; it is strongly shaped by instructional quality and teacher competence.

Skill development in PATHFIT activities. Skill development is a core PATHFIT outcome involving movement competence, fitness, and confidence in physical activity. Chawre (2025) found that structured PE improves coordination and motor skills. Longakit et al. (2024) reported significant gains in movement competence using game skill-based instruction. Simón-Chico et al. (2023) found that challenge-based approaches improve tactical



understanding. Dimarucot et al. (2024) reported improved physical fitness after a 12-week PATHFIT intervention. Tolentino et al. (2022) identified locomotor and mobility skill gaps among PATHFIT students, highlighting the need for targeted instruction. Barnett et al. (2021) emphasized that skill acquisition depends heavily on feedback, demonstration, and task progression. PATHFIT can improve student skills, but gains are closely linked to competent and structured teaching practices.

Professionalism cultivated through PATHFIT. PATHFIT may also develop discipline, teamwork, leadership, responsibility, and interpersonal competence. Ma and Mazlan (2024) found that outdoor and activity-based programs improve communication, leadership, and adaptability. Chiva-Bartoll et al. (2020) reported that PE promotes fair play, civic values, and prosocial behavior. Pasno (2025) found that physical activity significantly predicted interpersonal competence among Filipino students. Masagca (2025) similarly linked physical factors with interpersonal confidence. Dela Cruz et al. (2025) reported that positive PATHFIT experiences influence attitudes and behavior. PATHFIT contributes not only to physical outcomes but also to professionalism-related traits valuable for academic and workplace success.

Relationship between teacher competence and student outcomes. Studies consistently show that teacher competence predicts stronger engagement, skill development, and positive student behavior. Dumandan and Guillena (2025) found that instructional and assessment competence significantly predicted student engagement. Falle (2025) reported that quality PE and motivation predicted physical effort. Guo et al. (2023, 2025) found that autonomy-supportive teaching enhances emotional and behavioral engagement. Wittwer et al. (2024) and Jiang et al. (2023) found that pedagogical content knowledge significantly improves skill acquisition. Yin et al. (2024) linked teacher physical literacy with student competence. Hinojosa-Torres et al. (2025), Luo et al. (2025), and Chen et al. (2025) found that professional competence also shapes motivation, values, and social behavior. Teacher competence is a consistent and powerful determinant of holistic student outcomes in physical education, supporting its investigation within PATHFIT contexts.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational survey design. It is descriptive as it determined the levels of perceived teacher professional competence across seven domains—content knowledge, pedagogical skills, communication skills, assessment and evaluation, professional attitudes and values, adaptability and innovation, and lifelong learning and professional growth—as well as the levels of student engagement, skill development, and professionalism in PATHFIT 1. It is also correlational because it examined the relationships between teacher professional competence (independent variable) and student outcomes (dependent variables). Statistical analyses were conducted to determine the strength and direction of these relationships, providing evidence on how teacher competence is associated with engagement, skill development, and professionalism in PATHFIT 1.

Research Environment

The study was conducted in five (5) selected higher education institutions in Dumaguete City and nearby areas, namely Foundation University (FU), Negros Oriental State University (NORSU), Metro Dumaguete College (MDC), Asian College (ACSAT), and Colegio de Santa Catalina de Alejandria (COSCA). These institutions implemented the PATHFIT program as mandated by the CHED under CMO No. 39, series of 2021, which states that PATHFIT courses are designed to “provide experiential learning experiences that promote lifelong fitness, health awareness, and physical activity engagement among students.” This policy establishes a standardized framework for tertiary PE, emphasizing outcomes such as physical literacy, fitness development, and active participation. The study considered students enrolled in PATHFIT courses, particularly those engaged in movement competency training, where structured physical activities were delivered by qualified PE instructors. The selected institutions provided appropriate academic and physical environments, including sports facilities, instructional spaces, and necessary learning resources, ensuring the feasibility of data collection and supporting the examination of students’ perceptions of teacher competence in relation to their engagement, skill development, and professionalism.



Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were students enrolled in PATHFIT 1 across selected tertiary institutions in Dumaguete City during the academic year (AY) 2025–2026. The total population consisted of 4,892 students from the aforementioned institutions. To ensure representativeness, the study employed a stratified sampling technique. The population was first grouped by institution (serving as strata), and samples were proportionally allocated based on each school's population size. Using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a total sample size of 380 respondents was determined.

The distribution was as follows:

School	Population	Proportion	Sample Size
Foundation University	1092	22.37	85
Negros Oriental State University	2400	48.95	186
Metro Dumaguete College	442	8.95	34
Asian College	513	10.52	40
Colegio de Santa Catalina de Alejandria	445	9.21	35
Total	4,892	100%	380

Within each institution, random sampling was applied to select individual respondents. This ensured that each student had an equal chance of being included, thereby minimizing selection bias and enhancing the reliability of the data. The use of stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation of each institution, while random selection within strata strengthened the objectivity of the sampling process.

This approach was appropriate for the study because it allowed for more accurate generalization of findings across the participating institutions. The combined use of stratified and random sampling enhanced the representativeness and validity of the data, certifying that differences across institutions

Instrumentation

The main instrument used in this study was a validated survey questionnaire developed based on the research objectives, related literature, and the study's theoretical foundations. The instrument was designed to collect quantitative data on students' perceptions of their PATHFIT teachers' professional competence and corresponding learning outcomes. Before full administration, the questionnaire underwent expert validation to establish content validity and alignment with the constructs of the study. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: disclosure statement, extent of professional competence of PATHFIT teachers and students' level of engagement, skill development and professionalism. The instrument assessed teachers' content knowledge, pedagogical skills, professional attitudes and values, communication skills, assessment and evaluation skills, adaptability and innovation, and lifelong learning and professional growth using a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was administered online through coordinated distribution with PATHFIT instructors to ensure accessibility and efficient data collection. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha Test. All constructs yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients greater than 0.70, indicating acceptable to high internal consistency. This result confirmed that the items within each variable were reliable and consistently measured their intended constructs.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The researcher employed both descriptive and inferential statistical tools to analyze the data, provided that all underlying assumptions were met. Mean was used to determine the level of agreement or perception based on the responses from Likert-scale items. This was applied to assess the professional competence of PATHFIT teachers and the students' level of engagement, skill development, and professionalism. The Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation was used to assess the correlation between teacher competence and student engagement, skill development, and professionalism. To identify the degree of relationship between two variables, the following guidelines were used based on the classification of correlation coefficients (Schober, Boer, & Schwarte, 2018):



Value of r	Strength of Relationship
Between ± 0.50 to ± 1.00	$\pm$ strong relationship
Between ± 0.30 to ± 0.49	$\pm$ moderate relationship
Between ± 0.10 to ± 0.29	$\pm$ weak relationship
Between ± 0.01 to ± 0.09	$\pm$ very weak relationship

Ethics Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards in research, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Ethical clearance and permission were first secured from the participating institutions prior to data collection. All data gathered were handled with strict confidentiality and were stored in secure, password-protected files accessible only to the researcher. Furthermore, the data were used solely for academic and research purposes. Upon completion of the study, all collected data were securely retained and would be disposed of appropriately in accordance with institutional data management policies. The study also ensured that the research process remained unbiased, respectful, and aligned with institutional ethical guidelines. Academic consultation was conducted to review the study's ethical compliance.

AI Usage and Assistance

The researcher acknowledged the use of AI-assisted tools, including OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Grammarly, for language refinement and technical clarity. The application of AI did not replace the intellectual work of the researcher. All AI-assisted outputs were carefully reviewed, critically evaluated, and substantially revised to ensure academic rigor and contextual relevance to the study. The interpretation of data, analysis of findings, and formulation of conclusions were conducted entirely by the researcher. This ensures that the study maintains originality, accuracy, and full compliance with ethical standards in academic research.

Results and Discussions

To determine the verbal interpretation of responses and the extent of competence, the researcher applied the following descriptions:

Extent of Implementation (EoC)

4.21–5.00 – Very High (VH)

3.41–4.20 – High (H)

2.61–3.40 – Moderate (M)

1.81–2.60 – Low (L)

1.00–1.80 – Very Low (VL)

Table 1.1

Extent of Professional Competence of PE Teachers Demonstrated in Terms of Content Knowledge

My teacher...	$\bar{x}$	EoC	SD
1. connects physical education concepts to real-life situations.	4.63	VH	0.60
2. manifests knowledge of various physical activities, sports, and fitness methods.	4.58	VH	0.63
3. can clearly explain the 'why' behind different exercises and movements.	4.58	VH	0.61
4. demonstrates a deep understanding of physical education concepts and principles (e.g., anatomy, physiology, exercise science).	4.54	VH	0.67
Composite	4.58	VH	0.63

Note: n = 379

Table 1.1 indicates that the extent of professional competence of PE teachers in terms of content knowledge is very high ($\bar{x} = 4.58$). This suggests that the teachers consistently exhibit strong mastery of the subject matter, as reflected in their ability to integrate concepts into practical contexts, demonstrate broad knowledge across activities, provide clear explanations of movement purposes, and apply foundational principles of physical education.



The highest-rated indicator is the teachers' ability to connect concepts to real-life applications ($\bar{x} = 4.63$). Within the context of PATHFIT 1 under CMO No. 39, series of 2021, content knowledge is not limited to theoretical understanding but extends to the ability to explain movement principles, body mechanics, and physical activity concepts in ways that are relevant to students' lived experiences. The very high rating implies that the teachers' instruction was anchored in relevance, enabling students to see the value of physical education beyond the classroom setting. Such practice supports meaningful learning by situating knowledge within familiar and practical experiences.

The result aligns with Ward et al. (2021), who emphasized that content knowledge becomes impactful when integrated with instructional delivery, and González-Calvo et al. (2022), who found that contextualized teaching enhances engagement and retention. The teachers were also perceived to manifest extensive knowledge of various physical activities and fitness approaches ($\bar{x} = 4.58$). This reflects their capability to present diverse learning experiences, which is essential in addressing varying student interests and promoting comprehensive physical development. Moreover, the ability to explain underlying reasons behind movements ($\bar{x} = 4.58$) indicates that the teachers emphasize understanding rather than rote performance. By clarifying the purpose and benefits of exercises, teachers likely enhance students' awareness of proper techniques and the significance of each activity.

The slightly lower mean for demonstrating deep understanding of anatomy, physiology, and exercise science can be attributed to the less visible nature of theoretical knowledge. Students tend to recognize applied knowledge more readily than abstract concepts, particularly in performance-based settings like physical education. This observation is supported by Budiarto and Riandi (2022), who argued that content knowledge must be integrated with pedagogy and communication to influence learning outcomes. Further reinforcing this, Wittwer et al. (2024) posited that pedagogical content knowledge enables teachers to transform theoretical principles into practical learning tasks, while Yin et al. (2024) asserted that teachers' physical literacy directly influences students' understanding of movement concepts. These studies collectively suggest that the effectiveness of content knowledge lies not in its depth alone, but in its application and translation into practice.

Content knowledge is most impactful when it is contextualized, demonstrated, and connected to practice, rather than presented as abstract information. Teachers should explicitly link theory to practice, such as explaining muscle function during exercises or biomechanics during movement execution. This strengthens cognitive understanding and ensures that students not only perform movements but also understand their purpose.

Table 1.2

Extent of Professional Competence of PE Teachers Demonstrated in Terms of Pedagogical Skills

My teacher...	$\bar{x}$	EoC	SD
1. uses effective teaching methods that help me learn and understand new skills.	4.60	VH	0.62
2. provides clear and concise instructions for activities and exercises.	4.60	VH	0.61
3. manages the class effectively, ensuring a productive and safe learning environment.	4.58	VH	0.63
4. provides a variety of teaching methods to meet different learning needs.	4.52	VH	0.69
Composite	4.58	VH	0.64

Note: n = 379

Table 1.2 reveals that the extent of professional competence of PE teachers in terms of pedagogical skills was very high ($\bar{x} = 4.58$). This signifies that the teachers consistently demonstrate strong instructional capability through their ability to use effective teaching methods, provide clear and concise instructions, manage the class effectively, and provide a variety of teaching methods to support diverse learners. These interconnected skills collectively contribute to a well-structured and supportive learning environment that promotes better understanding, participation, and skill development among students. In PATHFIT 1, where students are introduced to fundamental movement patterns, the ability to organize instruction and provide clear demonstrations is essential in ensuring correct skill acquisition.



The very high rating suggests that the teachers are able to use effective methods that facilitate students' understanding and skill acquisition, making lessons more accessible and meaningful. At the same time, their ability to provide clear instructions ensures that students can easily follow activities and perform tasks with confidence, reducing ambiguity during class participation. In addition, teachers were perceived to manage the class effectively, which contributes to maintaining a structured, productive, and safe learning environment—an essential component in physical education where active participation is required. This effective management likely supports smooth transitions between activities and maximizes instructional time. In line with the result, Casey and MacPhail (2021) also claimed that varied pedagogical approaches enhance inclusivity and learning outcomes. Furthermore, the ability to provide a variety of teaching methods highlights the teachers' responsiveness to different learning needs. By incorporating varied approaches, teachers are able to accommodate diverse learners, thereby enhancing engagement and inclusivity in the learning process.

The relatively lower mean for providing a variety of teaching methods implies that, although teachers are effective, differentiation may still be less visible to students. This may occur because PE classes often rely on demonstrations, drills, and group activities, which may appear repetitive across sessions. Research suggests that limited variation in instructional strategies can affect engagement and reduce opportunities for individualized learning (Tagare et al., 2025). In contrast, the use of diverse strategies such as game-based learning and challenge-based activities has been shown to significantly enhance movement competence and engagement (Longakit et al., 2024).

Renshaw et al. (2020) maintained that learning environments designed with appropriate task constraints significantly improve motor skill development by aligning activities with learners' capabilities. In the same vein, Casey and MacPhail (2021) noted that varied and student-centered teaching approaches enhance both inclusivity and learning outcomes in physical education. Such high levels of pedagogical competence directly support the effective implementation of CHED Memorandum Order No. 39, Series of 2021. These skills enable teachers to translate curriculum standards into engaging, inclusive, and meaningful PE experiences that address diverse learner needs. Consequently, strong pedagogical skills contribute to holistic and inclusive learning outcomes and serve as a critical foundation for improving teacher training programs and strengthening evaluation standards in outcomes-based Physical Education.

Additionally, Jiang et al. (2023) found that teachers with strong pedagogical knowledge provide clearer demonstrations and feedback, improving skill acquisition. Longakit et al. (2024) also demonstrated that structured, game-based instruction significantly enhances movement competence. Pedagogical effectiveness depends not only on clarity but also on instructional diversity and adaptability to learner needs. Teachers should incorporate varied, learner-centered strategies, including collaborative learning, game-based approaches, and technology integration, to sustain engagement and support differentiated learning.

Table 1.3

Extent of Professional Competence of PE Teachers Demonstrated in Terms of Professional Attitudes and Values

My teacher...	$\bar{x}$	EoC	SD
1. encourages discipline, teamwork and responsibility.	4.67	VH	0.57
2. treats all students fairly and with respect.	4.65	VH	0.60
3. serves as a positive role model for health, fitness, and professionalism.	4.63	VH	0.60
4. shows enthusiasm and passion for physical education.	4.62	VH	0.61
Composite	4.64	VH	0.60

Note: n = 379

Table 1.3 shows that the extent of professional competence of PE teachers in terms of professional attitudes and values was very high ($\bar{x} = 4.64$). This indicates that teachers consistently demonstrated positive dispositions in their teaching practice, as reflected in their ability to encourage discipline, teamwork, and responsibility, treat students fairly and with respect, serve as positive role models, and show enthusiasm and passion for physical education. These



qualities collectively contributed to a positive, motivating, and values-oriented learning environment that supported students' holistic development.

The very high rating mean suggests that teachers were able to encourage discipline, teamwork, and responsibility, indicating that the learning environment extended beyond skill acquisition and promoted essential values for students' personal and social development. The highest indicator, encouraging discipline, teamwork, and responsibility, suggests that teachers effectively use PE as a platform for values formation. This supports the view that physical education provides structured opportunities for character development through social interaction and role modeling (Bailey et al., 2021; Licudine, 2024). Teachers' professional behavior significantly influences students' attitudes, reinforcing discipline

Moreover, teachers were perceived to treat students fairly and with respect, highlighting the presence of an inclusive and supportive classroom climate. In addition, the ability of teachers to serve as positive role models reflects their influence on students' attitudes toward health, fitness, and professionalism. By consistently modeling appropriate behaviors, teachers likely reinforced the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles and demonstrating professionalism in various contexts.

The slightly lower mean for showing enthusiasm and passion for PE suggests that enthusiasm is more affective and subjective compared to observable behaviors like fairness and discipline. Students may recognize behavioral expectations more easily than internal emotional expressions. However, research indicates that teacher enthusiasm plays a crucial role in motivating students and promoting positive attitudes toward physical activity (Chen et al., 2025). Bailey et al. (2021) emphasize that physical education serves as a platform for character development, where structured activities and teacher modeling contribute to the formation of positive values such as responsibility and sportsmanship. In alignment with CMO 39, which promotes holistic development, the strong performance in this domain highlights the role of teachers in shaping not only physical competence but also ethical and social behavior among students. Additionally, professional competence encompasses not only content mastery but also interpersonal communication and continuous professional growth, reflecting the importance of attitudes and values in delivering holistic Physical Education (Budiarto and Riandi, 2022).

Professional values are highly visible, but affective dimensions such as enthusiasm require intentional expression. Teachers should actively demonstrate enthusiasm and passion, as these influence student motivation, participation, and long-term engagement in physical activity.

Table 1.4

Extent of Professional Competence of PE Teachers Demonstrated in Terms of Communication Skills

My teacher...	$\bar{x}$	EoC	SD
1. communicates clearly and effectively with students.	4.63	VH	0.62
2. is approachable and willing to listen to student questions or concerns.	4.63	VH	0.60
3. provides constructive and understandable feedback.	4.61	VH	0.62
4. uses appropriate verbal and non-verbal cues during teaching.	4.55	VH	0.66
Composite	4.61	VH	0.63

Note: n = 379

Table 1.4 reveals that the extent of professional competence of PE teachers in terms of communication skills is very high ($\bar{x}$ = 4.61). This indicates that teachers consistently demonstrate effective communication practices, as reflected in their ability to communicate clearly and effectively, be approachable and willing to listen, provide constructive feedback, and use appropriate verbal and non-verbal cues during instruction. These skills contribute to a clear, supportive, and interactive learning environment that enhances student understanding and participation.



The highest indicators are clear communication and approachability, which stress the importance of clarity and responsiveness in instruction. This is supported by findings that effective communication enhances intrinsic motivation and engagement in PE (Koka & Hein, 2020; Leisterer & Jekauc, 2021). Clear communication is essential in PE settings, where both verbal explanation and demonstration play a crucial role in skill acquisition. This also reflects the presence of an open communication environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves. This approachability may have strengthened teacher-student interaction and supported a more responsive and learner-centered teaching process. Additionally, communication that integrates empathy and interaction fosters a supportive learning environment that encourages participation (Leleka et al., 2024; Cocca et al., 2023). Moreover, the ability to provide constructive and understandable feedback highlights the teachers' role in guiding student improvement. Feedback that is both clear and constructive allows students to recognize their strengths and areas for development, thereby enhancing their performance and confidence in executing physical skills.

The lowest indicator is the use of verbal and non-verbal cues. This result may be attributed to the complexity of communication in movement-based instruction. Effective PE communication requires simultaneous use of verbal explanation, demonstration, gestures, and feedback, which may not always be consciously recognized by students (Chen et al., 2023). This finding emphasizes communication as a critical mechanism through which teacher competence influences learning outcomes. Even when content knowledge and pedagogical skills are strong, ineffective communication can limit students' ability to translate instruction into performance. Koka and Hein (2020) found that students' perceptions of teacher feedback significantly influence intrinsic motivation in PE, while Leisterer and Jekauc (2021) demonstrated that the quality of communication affects students' emotional experiences and engagement. In the context of PATHFIT 1, strong communication skills contribute to a learning environment where students feel supported, informed, and motivated to participate actively.

Communication in PE is inherently multimodal, requiring integration of verbal, visual, and kinesthetic elements. Teachers should strengthen demonstration-based communication and feedback mechanisms to improve comprehension and skill execution.

Table 1.5

Extent of Professional Competence of PE Teachers Demonstrated in Terms of Assessment and Evaluation Skills

My teacher...	$\bar{x}$	EoC	SD
1. clearly explains how my performance will be assessed and graded.	4.59	VH	0.63
2. provides fair and accurate assessments of my performance.	4.56	VH	0.64
3. provides feedback that helps me understand my strengths and areas for improvement.	4.54	VH	0.65
4. uses various methods to evaluate student learning (e.g., skill tests, participation, knowledge checks).	4.53	VH	0.70
Composite	4.56	VH	0.66

Note: n = 379

Table 1.5 shows that the extent of professional competence of PE teachers in terms of assessment and evaluation skills is very high ($\bar{x} = 4.56$). This suggests that teachers consistently demonstrate effective practices in assessing student performance, as reflected in their ability to clearly explain assessment procedures, provide fair and accurate evaluations, give feedback that supports improvement, and use various evaluation methods. These practices collectively contribute to a transparent, balanced, and supportive assessment process that facilitates student learning and improvement.

The highest-rated indicator, a clear explanation of how performance will be assessed, suggests that assessment clarity functions as a cognitive organizer, enabling students to align their effort with expected outcomes. This is consistent with formative assessment theory, where clarity of criteria reduces ambiguity and enhances self-regulated learning (López-Pastor et al., 2020). When students understand expectations, they are more likely to engage in goal-directed behavior, which strengthens both performance and motivation. Such practices are



consistent with the objectives of the CMO 39 series of 2021, which emphasize the development of competence through guided learning experiences. When assessment is used effectively, it supports both cognitive understanding and psychomotor refinement. Moreover, the effectiveness of assessment in this context reflects its dual function as both an evaluative and instructional tool. González-Fernández et al. (2024) argued that assessment practices guide learning progression when aligned with instructional objectives, while Wang (2024) asserted that assessment also serves as a reflective mechanism for refining teaching strategies. This explains why students perceive assessment as fair and supportive because it is embedded within the learning process rather than positioned as a separate evaluative endpoint. Additionally, Cocca et al. (2023) demonstrated that constructive feedback enhances motivation and confidence, reinforcing the role of feedback as a driver of continuous improvement.

However, the relatively lower mean for the use of varied evaluation methods reveals a critical limitation in assessment diversity. Although assessment is perceived as fair and clear, it may still rely predominantly on traditional methods such as performance tests, participation grading, and attendance-based evaluation. This aligns with findings from Bermundo (2025) and Sinio and Tolentino (2024), who identified inconsistencies in feedback quality and limited use of technology-driven and individualized assessment strategies in Philippine PE contexts.

The lower rating suggests that students are less exposed to authentic and multidimensional assessment practices, such as peer assessment, reflective evaluation, or digital monitoring systems. Assessment and evaluation competence is strong in clarity and fairness, but limited in methodological diversity, indicating a gap between traditional evaluation and contemporary formative assessment practices.

Table 1.6

Extent of Professional Competence of PE Teachers Demonstrated in Terms of Adaptation and Innovation

My teacher...	$\bar{x}$	EoC	SD
1. adjusts activities to suit the needs and abilities of different students.	4.56	VH	0.68
2. adapts effectively when unexpected situations arise during class.	4.54	VH	0.65
3. adapts well to limited equipment and space.	4.53	VH	0.66
4. incorporates new and interesting activities or technologies into lessons.	4.52	VH	0.67
Composite	4.54	VH	0.67

Note: n = 379

Table 1.6 shows that the extent of professional competence of PE teachers in terms of adaptation and innovation is very high ($\bar{x}$ = 4.54). This indicates that the teachers consistently demonstrate flexibility and creativity in their teaching practices, as reflected in their ability to adjust activities based on student needs, adapt to unexpected situations, manage limitations in resources, and incorporate new and engaging approaches in instruction. These competencies collectively contribute to a flexible, inclusive, and engaging learning environment that supports diverse student needs and sustained participation.

The very high rating reflects teachers' strong ability to adapt instruction to diverse learner needs, environmental constraints, and situational challenges. The highest indicator, adjusting activities based on student abilities, demonstrates the application of adaptive teaching principles, where instruction is modified to match learners' capabilities. This aligns with the constraints-led approach in Motor Learning Theory, which posits that skill acquisition is optimized when tasks are adjusted according to individual learner constraints (Renshaw et al., 2020). By tailoring activities, teachers create conditions that facilitate both engagement and skill progression. Additionally, adaptability reflects a broader instructional responsiveness that is essential in dynamic learning environments. Zach et al. (2025) and Leleka et al. (2024) claimed that effective teaching in contemporary contexts requires flexibility in both instructional design and delivery, particularly in accommodating diverse learners and evolving educational demands. Chen et al. (2023) further conjectured that adaptive teaching enhances engagement by aligning instruction with students' needs and learning preferences.



In contrast, the lower rating for incorporating new activities or technologies signifies that innovation is constrained by contextual and systemic factors. While teachers demonstrate flexibility, the integration of innovative strategies, particularly technology-based approaches, may be limited by resource availability, institutional support, or teacher preparedness. This interpretation is supported by Bimmuyag (2024) and Sinio and Tolentino (2024), who identified gaps in technological integration and digital fitness monitoring in Philippine PE programs. The discrepancy indicates that adaptability is more easily achieved within existing structures, whereas innovation requires external support systems, infrastructure, and continuous professional development.

Adaptability is a strong internal competency, while innovation is influenced by external constraints and systemic limitations. Instructional improvement should focus on expanding innovation through both technology integration and creative low-resource strategies, ensuring that adaptability evolves into transformative teaching practices rather than reactive adjustments. In PATHFIT 1, where students may have different levels of prior experience and physical capability, the ability to adjust activities and instructional strategies allows teachers to maintain engagement and facilitate skill progression.

Table 1.7

Extent of Professional Competence of PE Teachers Demonstrated in Terms of Lifelong Learning and Professional Growth

My teacher...	$\bar{x}$	EoC	SD
1. attends or participates in professional development opportunities.	4.57	VH	0.63
2. reflects on teaching experiences to improve future class performance.	4.57	VH	0.61
3. appears to stay updated with current trends and research in physical education and fitness.	4.52	VH	0.67
4. seeks feedback from students or colleagues to enhance teaching effectiveness.	4.47	VH	0.69
Composite	4.53	VH	0.65

Note: n = 379

Table 1.7 indicates that the extent of professional competence of PE teachers in terms of lifelong learning and professional growth was very high ($\bar{x} = 4.53$). This means that teachers consistently demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement, as reflected in their engagement in development opportunities, reflective practices, awareness of current trends, and openness to feedback. These practices collectively contributed to sustained professional development and enhanced teaching quality in physical education.

The very high ratings signify that teachers are perceived as committed to continuous improvement, particularly in engaging in professional development and reflective practice. These indicators suggest that teachers actively refine their instructional approaches, which is critical in maintaining teaching effectiveness in evolving educational contexts. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) emphasized that sustained professional development significantly enhances teaching quality and student outcomes, as it enables teachers to adapt to new pedagogical trends and learner needs. Teachers who engage in reflective practice are better equipped to refine their instructional approaches and respond to the diverse needs of students. This also coincides with the broader goals of CMO No. 39 series of 2017, which advocates for quality education through competent and continuously improving educators. Furthermore, professional growth is closely linked to reflective practice, which allows teachers to evaluate and improve their instructional strategies. Wang (2024) postulated that reflection is central to professional identity, enabling teachers to align their practices with educational standards and student needs. Similarly, Leleka et al. (2024) and Chen et al. (2023) noted that continuous learning fosters innovation, adaptability, and responsiveness in teaching.

The lower rating for seeking feedback from students or colleagues reveals a visibility gap rather than a competence deficit. Students may not directly observe feedback-seeking behaviors, which often occur outside of classroom interaction. Elic (2024) observed that professional development activities are not always visible to learners,



leading to underestimation of this competency. However, the finding also suggests that feedback processes may not be systematically integrated into classroom practice.

Professional growth is evident but partially hidden from student perception, particularly in collaborative and feedback-oriented practices. Teachers should incorporate visible and participatory feedback mechanisms, such as student evaluations and reflective discussions, to strengthen both instructional quality and perceived competence.

Table 1.8

Summary Table of the Extent of Professional Competence of PE Teachers

Constructs of Professional Competence	$\bar{x}$	EoC	SD
1. Content Knowledge	4.58	VH	0.63
2. Pedagogical Skills	4.58	VH	0.64
3. Professional Attitudes and Values;	4.64	VH	0.60
4. Communication Skills	4.61	VH	0.63
5. Assessment and Evaluation Skills	4.56	VH	0.66
6. Adaptability and Innovation	4.54	VH	0.67
7. Lifelong Learning and Professional Growth	4.53	VH	0.65
Overall	4.58	VH	0.64

Note: n = 379

The summary presented in Table 1.8 confirms that all domains of professional competence were rated very high, with an overall mean of 4.58. This points to the fact that students perceive their teachers as highly competent across multiple dimensions. The consistency of very high ratings across all domains supports the idea that effective teaching in PE is multidimensional, requiring the integration of knowledge, pedagogy, communication, and professional values. In other words, students perceive their teachers as effective facilitators of learning who are capable of delivering instruction that is both meaningful and responsive to their needs.

Among the domains, professional attitudes and values obtained the highest mean, indicating that students most strongly recognize teachers' fairness, respect, discipline, and role modeling. This finding reflects the highly observable nature of affective and interpersonal behaviors in PE settings. Unlike other competencies that may operate behind instructional processes, professional values are consistently demonstrated through daily interactions, classroom management, and teacher-student relationships. This is supported by Bailey et al. (2021), who emphasized that PE serves as a platform for character development through structured interaction and modeling. Similarly, Licudine (2024) and Hinojosa-Torres et al. (2025) postulated that teacher professionalism significantly influences students' attitudes, social behavior, and engagement. These findings suggest that students are particularly sensitive to the relational and behavioral dimensions of teaching, which directly shape the classroom climate and learning experience.

On the other hand, lifelong learning and professional growth obtained the lowest mean, although it still falls within the very high category. This relatively lower rating may be attributed to the limited visibility of professional development practices from the students' perspective. While teachers may actively participate in training, reflection, and professional collaboration, these activities often occur outside the classroom and are not directly observable by students. As a result, students may base their perceptions primarily on observable teaching practices rather than on underlying professional development efforts.

This interpretation is supported by Elic (2024), who noted that professional growth activities are often underrecognized by students because they are not explicitly integrated into classroom interaction. Nevertheless, the very high rating in this domain suggests that students indirectly perceive professional growth through improved instructional practices, updated teaching strategies, and adaptive responses to learner needs. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) emphasized that sustained professional development enhances teaching effectiveness, while Wang (2024) maintained that reflective practice strengthens instructional quality and alignment with educational standards.



These studies indicate that professional growth, although less visible, plays a critical role in sustaining overall teaching competence. The results suggest that professional development programs for PE teachers should adopt a holistic and balanced approach, which not only strengthens instructional and pedagogical competencies but also sustains professional growth and innovation. In particular, efforts should be made to enhance the visibility of professional learning practices through reflective and participatory teaching strategies, integrate continuous professional development into classroom practices, and maintain strong professional values that foster a positive and inclusive learning environment.

Ultimately, improving teacher competence requires a sustained commitment to continuous learning, reflective practice, and integrated instructional development, ensuring that PE teachers remain effective, adaptive, and responsive to the evolving needs of students in PATHFIT programs.

The overall pattern of results demonstrates that teacher competence is not a collection of isolated skills but a multidimensional and interconnected construct. First, content knowledge provides the foundation for instruction, while pedagogical skills translate knowledge into effective learning experiences. Second, communication facilitates understanding and engagement, while assessment guides learning progression. Third, adaptability ensures responsiveness to diverse needs, while professional values shape the learning environment. Lastly, lifelong learning sustains instructional improvement. This integrated perspective aligns with the framework of Budiarto and Riandi (2022), who conceptualized teacher competence as a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and continuous development. It also reflects the domains outlined in the PPST, which emphasize the holistic nature of teaching competence.

Table 2.1

Level of Students' Engagement in PATHFIT Classes

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	LoE	SD
1. I actively participate in most PATHFIT class activities.	4.58	VH	0.62
2. I am motivated to do my best in PATHFIT classes.	4.57	VH	0.62
3. I feel excited and look forward to my PATHFIT classes.	4.55	VH	0.66
4. I feel physically and mentally involved during PATHFIT classes.	4.53	VH	0.65
Composite	4.56	VH	0.64

Note: Level of Engagement (LoE); 4.21-5.00, Very High (VH); 3.41-4.20, High (H); 2.61-3.40, Moderate (M); 1.81-2.60, Low (L); 1.00-1.80, Very Low (VL); n = 379

Table 2.1 shows that the level of students' engagement in PE classes is very high ($\bar{x}$ = 4.56). This connotes that students consistently demonstrate active involvement in their PATHFIT classes, as reflected in their participation, motivation, enthusiasm, and overall physical and mental engagement. These aspects collectively contribute to a dynamic and engaging learning environment that supports student involvement and active learning. This also reflects the effectiveness of the teaching practices employed, as engagement is often a direct response to the quality of instruction and the learning environment.

The highest rating for active participation suggests that students are effectively engaged in physical activities. This implies that the class environment encourages participation and allows the students to engage meaningfully in various physical activities. Vasconcellos et al. (2020), likewise, found that autonomy-supportive teaching significantly enhances student engagement in PE, and Liu et al. (2022) viewed teacher competence as a strong predictor of motivation. Within PATHFIT 1, the high level of engagement suggests that teachers are creating an environment that encourages active participation and sustained interest in physical activity. Additionally, engagement is influenced by instructional quality and learning environment. Drugău et al. (2022) also found that positive teaching practices increase participation and satisfaction, while innovative approaches such as game-based learning enhance engagement (Longakit et al., 2024; Martín-Rodríguez & Madrigal-Cerezo, 2025).



The lower rating for cognitive and mental involvement signifies that engagement is more behavioral than cognitive. This indicates that engagement is not limited to physical participation but also includes cognitive and emotional investment in the learning process. Students participate actively but may not always engage in deeper reflection or analysis. As noted by Phuong (2023), cognitive engagement often lags behind behavioral engagement, while Tagare et al. (2025) reported moderate engagement levels in PATHFIT, indicating variability in learning depth.

Engagement is strong in participation but requires strengthening in cognitive and reflective dimensions. When students are motivated and interested, they are more likely to invest effort in learning and improving their skills. Teachers should integrate reflective, analytical, and student-centered learning activities to promote deeper engagement.

Table 2.2

Level of Students' Skill Development in PATHFIT Activities

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	LoE	SD
1. I have learned and improved new specific physical activities or sports skills in PATHFIT.	4.47	VH	0.70
2. I feel more confident in performing various physical activities as a result of PATHFIT.	4.46	VH	0.68
3. I have improved my physical fitness (e.g., strength, endurance, flexibility) through PATHFIT.	4.43	VH	0.70
4. I have enhanced my motor skills (e.g., coordination, balance, agility) through PATHFIT.	4.41	VH	0.71
Composite	4.44	VH	0.70

Note: Level of Engagement (LoE); 4.21-5.00, Very High (VH); 3.41-4.20, High (H); 2.61-3.40, Moderate (M); 1.81-2.60, Low (L); 1.00-1.80, Very Low (VL); n = 379

Table 2.2 reveals that the level of students' skill development in PATHFIT activities is very high ($\bar{x} = 4.44$). This indicates that the students experience substantial improvement in their physical abilities, as reflected in their acquisition of skills, increased confidence, enhanced fitness, and development of motor abilities. These outcomes collectively indicate that the PATHFIT classes effectively support the students' physical growth and skill progression. This also shows that instructional practices are successfully facilitating the acquisition and refinement of fundamental motor skills.

The highest-rated indicator, learning and improving specific physical activities or sports skills, indicates that the PATHFIT classes effectively facilitated skill acquisition across various activities and sports. This suggests that the students most strongly recognize visible and task-specific skill gains, particularly in structured activities. This also reflects the effectiveness of instructional strategies in promoting hands-on learning and practice. This aligns with findings that well-designed and structured physical education programs significantly improve students' physical performance and sport-specific competencies (Dimarucot et al., 2024; Longakit et al., 2024). These studies emphasize that improvement occurs not merely through participation, but through intentional, skill-focused instruction and guided practice. Furthermore, skill development in PE is strongly influenced by the quality of instruction, particularly in terms of demonstration, feedback, and progression. Barnett et al. (2021) posited that effective teaching practices are critical in developing fundamental movement skills, while Zhang et al. (2025) emphasized that active engagement in structured activities enhances motor learning and performance outcomes. These findings reinforce that skill acquisition is not incidental but is systematically facilitated through structured instructional processes.

However, the relatively lower mean for enhancement of motor skills such as coordination, balance, and agility suggests a distinction between task-specific skill acquisition and fundamental movement development. Unlike sport-specific skills, motor abilities require prolonged, repetitive, and progressively structured training. Tolentino et al. (2022) identified that students often demonstrate gaps in locomotor, non-locomotor, and mobility skills, indicating that these foundational competencies require more targeted instructional attention. This lower rating



may also reflect the fact that improvements in motor skills are less immediately observable compared to sport-specific performance, making them less perceptible to students.

Skill development in PATHFIT is highly effective in promoting task-specific performance and confidence, but relatively less pronounced in foundational motor competencies, which require long-term and systematic development. Instruction should move beyond participation and sport execution toward progressive motor skill development frameworks, incorporating structured drills, movement progressions, and targeted feedback to strengthen coordination, balance, and agility.

Table 2.3

Level of Students' Professionalism Cultivated Through PATHFIT

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	LoE	SD
1. I show respect for my PE teacher(s) and classmates during PATHFIT.	4.75	VH	0.49
2. I understand the importance of punctuality and responsibility in PATHFIT.	4.69	VH	0.53
3. I consistently follow rules and guidelines in PATHFIT classes.	4.67	VH	0.55
4. I demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play during PATHFIT activities.	4.50	VH	0.67
Composite	4.65	VH	0.56

Note: Level of Engagement (LoE); 4.21-5.00, Very High (VH); 3.41-4.20, High (H); 2.61-3.40, Moderate (M); 1.81-2.60, Low (L); 1.00-1.80, Very Low (VL); n = 379

Table 2.3 reveals that the level of students' professionalism cultivated through PATHFIT is very high ($\bar{x} = 4.65$). This indicates that students consistently demonstrate positive behavioral and ethical attributes during class, as reflected in their ability to show respect, understand responsibility, follow rules, and demonstrate sportsmanship. These qualities collectively contribute to a disciplined, respectful, and value-oriented learning environment that supports both personal growth and positive social interaction.

The highest-rated indicator, showing respect for teachers and classmates, suggests that students strongly internalize interpersonal values within the structured and interactive environment of physical education. This finding aligns with the literature emphasizing that PE serves as a platform for character development through social interaction, cooperation, and shared activities (Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2020; Dela Cruz et al., 2025). Additionally, Pasno (2025) found that participation in physical activity significantly predicts interpersonal competence among Filipino students, reinforcing the idea that structured physical environments promote not only physical outcomes but also social and behavioral development. This supports the notion that professionalism in PE emerges from repeated exposure to collaborative and rule-governed activities. Moreover, Bailey et al. (2021) also posited that PE contributes to character development by providing opportunities for structured interaction and value formation. In the context of PATHFIT 1, the high level of professionalism among students indicates that teaching practices are effectively promoting not only physical competence but also ethical and social responsibility, consistent with the holistic goals outlined in CMO 39.

The lowest-rated indicator, demonstrating sportsmanship and fair play, suggests that professionalism is not uniformly expressed across all dimensions, particularly those that are situational and interaction-dependent. Sportsmanship is often tested in competitive contexts, where emotions, peer dynamics, and outcomes such as winning or losing influence behavior. Ma and Mazlan (2024) highlighted that teamwork, leadership, and ethical behavior develop through experience-based interaction, which may vary across activities and contexts. Unlike respect and punctuality, which are individually regulated, sportsmanship requires consistent behavioral regulation in dynamic social situations, making it more complex to develop and sustain.

Professionalism is strongly developed in individual and observable behaviors but less consistently in situational and interaction-based behaviors such as sportsmanship. Teachers should incorporate intentional values-based



instruction, including reflective discussions, conflict resolution activities, and guided experiences in fair play, to strengthen ethical behavior in dynamic and competitive contexts.

Table 3.1

Relationship between the Teachers' Professional Competence and the Students' Level of Engagement in PATHFIT Classes

Students' Level of Engagement and Teachers...	r_s	P	Remark
• Content Knowledge	.610	<.001	Significant
• Pedagogical Skills	.630	<.001	Significant
• Professional Attitudes and Values;	.604	<.001	Significant
• Communication Skills	.623	<.001	Significant
• Assessment and Evaluation Skills	.635	<.001	Significant
• Adaptability and Innovation	.650	<.001	Significant
• Lifelong Learning and Professional Growth	.689	<.001	Significant
Overall	.677	<.001	Significant

Note: The data are not normally distributed; Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation at $\alpha = .05$; $n = 379$; $df = 377$

Table 3.1 shows a statistically significant and strong positive relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' level of engagement in PATHFIT classes, with correlation coefficients ranging from $r_s = .604$ to $.689$ ($p < .001$) and an overall correlation of $r_s = .677$. This finding signifies that student engagement is not solely an individual characteristic but is largely shaped by the instructional environment, teaching practices, and relational dynamics established by competent teachers. In this context, engagement emerges as a response to the quality of teaching, rather than as an isolated student behavior.

The strength of the relationship can be explained through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that engagement is enhanced when learners experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Teachers who demonstrate high professional competence, particularly in communication, pedagogy, and adaptability, are more likely to create learning environments that support these psychological needs (Vasconcellos et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022). For instance, clear instruction and meaningful feedback foster a sense of competence, while supportive teacher-student interactions enhance relatedness, both of which contribute to sustained engagement. Moreover, the findings suggest that domains such as lifelong learning, professional growth, and adaptability and innovation play a critical role in influencing engagement. Teachers who continuously refine their practices and adapt instruction to students' needs are better able to maintain students' interest and participation. Correspondingly, Dumandan and Guillena (2025) stated that instructional and assessment competence significantly predict student engagement in physical education. Likewise, Licudine (2024) emphasized that teacher professionalism influences students' attitudes, motivation, and willingness to participate in learning activities.

The relationship is further strengthened by the role of instructional clarity and feedback mechanisms. Guo et al. (2023, 2025) argued that teachers who provide structured guidance, constructive feedback, and autonomy-supportive environments significantly enhance both behavioral and emotional engagement. These findings suggest that engagement is not merely about participation in activities but involves a deeper connection to the learning process, which is facilitated by effective teaching practices. Additionally, the strong association between teacher competence and engagement reflects the interactive nature of PE, where learning is inherently participatory and socially mediated. In such environments, teacher behaviors—such as encouragement, responsiveness, and adaptability—directly influence students' willingness to engage. This reinforces the idea that engagement is co-constructed through teacher-student interaction rather than being solely student-driven.

Engagement is not an isolated variable but a reflection of how effectively teachers create supportive, motivating, and responsive learning environments. The results stress the need for teacher development programs to focus on enhancing competencies that directly influence engagement, such as adaptive teaching strategies that respond to



diverse learner needs, communication practices that provide clear instructions and meaningful feedback, and professional growth that ensures continuous improvement in teaching practices. By strengthening these competencies, teachers can create learning environments that not only encourage participation but also foster sustained motivation, deeper involvement, and meaningful engagement in PATHFIT classes.

Table 3.2

Relationship between the Teachers' Professional Competence and the Students' Level of Skill Development in PATHFIT Activities

Students' Level of Skill Development and Teachers...	r_s	p	Remark
• Content Knowledge	.573	<.001	Significant
• Pedagogical Skills	.603	<.001	Significant
• Professional Attitudes and Values;	.577	<.001	Significant
• Communication Skills	.576	<.001	Significant
• Assessment and Evaluation Skills	.588	<.001	Significant
• Adaptability and Innovation	.633	<.001	Significant
• Lifelong Learning and Professional Growth	.650	<.001	Significant
Overall	.640	<.001	Significant

Note: The data are not normally distributed; Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation at $\alpha = .05$; $n = 379$; $df = 377$

Table 3.2 presents significant positive relationships between teachers' professional competence and students' level of skill development. The findings suggest that students' improvement in movement skills is closely linked to teachers' ability to continuously enhance their instructional practices and tailor learning experiences to individual needs.

Specifically, the data reflect a statistically significant and strong positive relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' level of skill development in PATHFIT activities, with correlation coefficients ranging from $r_s = .573$ to $.650$ ($p < .001$) and an overall value of $r_s = .640$. The strongest relationships were observed in lifelong learning and professional growth ($r_s = .650$) and adaptability and innovation ($r_s = .633$), followed closely by pedagogical skills ($r_s = .603$). In other words, students' improvement in physical skills, fitness, and movement competence is not merely a product of participation, but is fundamentally influenced by the quality, structure, and responsiveness of instruction delivered by competent teachers. In this context, skill development emerges as a direct outcome of how effectively teachers design, implement, and adapt learning experiences.

The strength of this relationship can be explained through Motor Learning Theory, which emphasizes that skill acquisition occurs through structured practice, appropriate feedback, and progressive task difficulty. Teachers who demonstrate high levels of pedagogical competence, particularly in providing clear demonstrations, organizing practice opportunities, and delivering timely feedback, create optimal conditions for motor learning (Barnett et al., 2021). This theoretical perspective is supported by Wittwer et al. (2024), who identified pedagogical content knowledge as a critical determinant of students' technical performance and skill progression. Their findings suggest that teachers who can effectively translate content knowledge into structured learning tasks enable students to acquire skills more efficiently. Furthermore, the role of pedagogical clarity and feedback is central to skill development. Jiang et al. (2023) found that teachers with strong pedagogical knowledge provide more precise demonstrations and clearer task representations, allowing students to better understand and replicate movements. This reduces cognitive load and accelerates skill acquisition. In addition, Longakit et al. (2024) demonstrated that structured, game skill-based interventions significantly improved movement competence among university students, highlighting that skill development is most effective when instruction is intentional, progressive, and aligned with learners' abilities.

The results also signify that domains such as adaptability and lifelong learning contribute significantly to skill development. Teachers who adapt activities based on student ability levels ensure that tasks remain challenging yet



achievable, which is essential for maintaining engagement and promoting improvement. This aligns with the constraints-led approach, where modifying task conditions enhances learning by matching the difficulty level to the learner's current capacity (Renshaw et al., 2020). Additionally, teachers who engage in continuous professional development are more likely to update their instructional strategies, incorporate new techniques, and refine their teaching practices, thereby improving the quality of skill instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

The strong relationship observed also reflects the distinction between structured learning environments and unstructured participation. While students may improve through repeated activity, the presence of competent instruction significantly accelerates skill acquisition by providing direction, correction, and reinforcement. Zhang et al. (2025) asserted that engagement combined with effective instruction leads to higher performance outcomes, suggesting that skill development is maximized when participation is guided by purposeful teaching.

Skill acquisition is not incidental but is the result of intentional instructional design, structured practice, and feedback mechanisms. The results underscore the importance of strengthening teacher competencies that directly influence skill development. Enhancing these competencies ensures that PATHFIT programs move beyond participation toward effective and measurable skill progression, enabling students to develop not only performance abilities but also long-term physical competence.

Table 3.3

Relationship between the Teachers' Professional Competence and the Students' Level of Professionalism Cultivated through PATHFIT

Students' Level of Professionalism and Teachers...	r_s	P	Remark
• Content Knowledge	.633	<.001	Significant
• Pedagogical Skills	.644	<.001	Significant
• Professional Attitudes and Values;	.657	<.001	Significant
• Communication Skills	.633	<.001	Significant
• Assessment and Evaluation Skills	.649	<.001	Significant
• Adaptability and Innovation	.638	<.001	Significant
• Lifelong Learning and Professional Growth	.646	<.001	Significant
Overall	.685	<.001	Significant

Note: The data are not normally distributed; Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation at $\alpha = .05$; $n = 379$; $df = 377$

Table 3.3 reveals a statistically significant and strong positive relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' level of professionalism in PATHFIT classes, with coefficients ranging from $r_s = .633$ to $.685$ ($p < .001$) and an overall correlation of $r_s = .685$, the highest among the three outcome variables. This finding suggests that students' development of values such as respect, responsibility, discipline, and ethical behavior is not merely incidental but is strongly influenced by the behaviors, practices, and interactions modeled and reinforced by competent teachers. In this context, professionalism emerges as a socially constructed outcome shaped by the learning environment and teacher-student interactions.

The strength of this relationship can be explained through Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that individuals acquire behaviors through observation, imitation, and reinforcement of role models. Teachers who consistently demonstrate professionalism, through fairness, respect, integrity, and accountability, serve as influential models whose behaviors are internalized by students (Hinojosa-Torres et al., 2025). When these behaviors are reinforced through structured activities and consistent expectations, students are more likely to adopt and sustain them. Moreover, the findings highlight that professional attitudes and values as a domain of teacher competence show the strongest association with student professionalism. This is expected, as values such as discipline, respect, and responsibility are directly transmitted through teacher behavior and classroom management practices. Licudine (2024) also emphasized that teacher professionalism significantly shapes students' attitudes, leadership, and interpersonal skills, while Chen et al. (2025) found that teachers' engagement and professional conduct inspire



students to develop positive behavioral patterns. These studies collectively indicate that professionalism is not only taught but modeled and reinforced through consistent interaction.

In addition, the strong relationship between assessment competence and student professionalism indicates that fairness and transparency in evaluation play a crucial role in shaping ethical behavior. When students perceive assessment as just and clearly defined, they are more likely to demonstrate accountability, integrity, and adherence to rules. This aligns with the perspective that structured and equitable learning environments promote responsible behavior by establishing clear expectations and reinforcing positive conduct.

The role of PE as a context for professionalism is also significant. Unlike purely academic settings, PE involves continuous interaction, collaboration, and participation in structured activities, which provide opportunities for students to practice social and ethical behaviors. Chiva-Bartoll et al. (2020) theorized that physical education fosters civic values, cooperation, and fair play through active engagement, while Pasno (2025) postulated that participation in physical activity enhances interpersonal competence among Filipino students. These findings suggest that professionalism in PATHFIT is developed through experiential learning, where students repeatedly engage in situations that require respect, teamwork, and ethical decision-making.

However, it is important to recognize that professionalism is influenced not only by teacher competence but also by the situational dynamics of interaction, particularly in competitive or collaborative contexts. As noted by Ma and Mazlan (2024), behaviors such as sportsmanship and ethical decision-making are more complex because they are tested in dynamic situations involving peer interaction, competition, and emotional responses. This explains why certain aspects of professionalism may develop at different rates, despite the overall strong relationship observed.

Professionalism is not simply taught but is modeled, reinforced, and practiced within structured and interactive learning environments. The results stress the need for teachers to consistently demonstrate and reinforce professional values by modeling ethical behavior, fairness, and respect in all interactions, creating structured opportunities for collaboration and social engagement, implementing fair and transparent assessment practices that promote accountability, and integrating reflective activities and discussions to deepen students' understanding of professionalism. By strengthening these practices, teachers can effectively cultivate not only students' physical competencies but also their character, interpersonal skills, and ethical behavior, which are essential outcomes of PATHFIT programs.

Conclusion

The findings of the study establish that teachers' competence is a key and multidimensional factor influencing student outcomes in PATHFIT 1, particularly in engagement, skill development, and professionalism. Students consistently rated their teachers as highly competent across content knowledge, pedagogical skills, communication, assessment, adaptability, professional values, and commitment to continuous learning. These competencies work together, rather than in isolation, to enhance the quality of instruction and the overall learning experience.

Results further show significant relationships between teacher competence and student outcomes, indicating that effective teaching in movement competency goes beyond content delivery. Teachers who communicate clearly, use appropriate instructional strategies, provide meaningful feedback, and model positive values create learning environments that promote active participation, skill acquisition, and positive behavioral development. The strong link between competence and student professionalism also highlights the role of teachers as behavioral models in physical education, supporting both skill and character formation.

Overall, PATHFIT 1 functions as a holistic learning experience that develops cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. The findings suggest that sustaining high teacher competence is essential for achieving these outcomes, along with continued professional development, curriculum alignment, and institutional support. In conclusion, teacher competence is a critical driver of effective learning in PATHFIT 1, influencing not only physical performance



but also student motivation, engagement, and values, thereby supporting lifelong physical activity and holistic development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed to address identified needs and to further enhance the quality of instruction and student outcomes in PATHFIT 1.

For Physical Education Teachers

1. Adopt reflective and evidence-based teaching practices by regularly evaluating instructional strategies through student feedback and peer observation to continuously refine lesson delivery, activity design and assessment methods in PATHFIT 1 to further enhance students' high level of content mastery.
2. Institutionalize a collaborative teaching improvement cycle within PATHFIT 1 program. The cycle should include peer observation using a standardized rubric aligned with CHED Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), short post-lesson reflection discussions, and documentation of improvements submitted to the program chair as part of faculty performance and quality assurance and to ensure continuous strengthening and sustainability of pedagogical competence.
3. Implement a monthly professional reflection and peer sharing session for PATHFIT 1 instructors, where each teacher completes a short reflection guide, recognizes fair play, discusses one real classroom experience with colleagues. Embed short reflection and analysis tasks during or after activities (e.g., movement analysis, goal-setting discussions) to deepen students' understanding.
4. Craft a departmentalized "3-point communication routine" in every PATHFIT session, where teachers consistently state clear, step-by-step instructions before activities, demonstrate and check for understanding through brief student recall or questioning, and provide immediate, specific feedback after performance.
5. Create a departmentalized "Formative Checkpoint Plus Immediate Feedback System" in every PATHFIT 1 class, where teachers intentionally integrate at least 2-3 quick performance checkpoints per session (e.g., skill demonstration, peer performance check, or short task execution) and provide immediate, specific and improvement-focused feedback using a simple guide.
6. Introduce at least one new or modified activity per unit (e.g., game-based drills, circuit training, station-based learning) to enhance engagement and sustain instructional effectiveness and modify activities based on students' ability levels, learning needs, available facilities and class conditions to maintain inclusivity and optimize skill development. Allocate 5–10 minutes per session for foundational motor skill drills (balance, coordination, agility) to support long-term physical competence.
7. Engage in a continuous professional development by regularly attending CHED- recognized trainings, webinars, or workshops in Physical Education and PATHFIT, and apply newly learned strategies directly in classroom teaching while sharing best practices with colleagues through faculty meeting to sustain lifelong learning and continuous improvement of teaching practices.

For PATHFIT 1 Students

8. Engage fully in physical tasks and discussions to maximize learning opportunities and sustain active participation by consistently maintaining involvement in all PATHFIT 1 activities, discussions and fitness tasks to preserve strong engagement levels.
9. Practice corrections immediately and integrate feedback into subsequent activities and deepen learning engagement by reflecting on personal performance and identifying ways to improve understanding and participation in class activities.
10. Maintain a simple performance log to track improvements in skills and fitness and continuously refine skills by regularly practicing learned techniques both inside and outside class to maintain and further improve proficiency.
11. Exhibit respect, teamwork, discipline, and fairness in both cooperative and competitive activities and extend engagement beyond class by voluntarily participating in school or community-based physical activities and wellness programs to reinforce lifelong involvement in fitness.

For Curriculum Developers and Academic Program Planners

12. Continuously review and update course content based on movement competency frameworks and emerging PE trends.



13. Include reflection, skill performance, and value formation in each module.
14. Require the use of performance, reflective, and peer-based assessments.
15. Include game-based learning, collaborative tasks, and adaptive activities in curriculum guides.

For Higher Education Institutions and Administrators

16. Conduct regular training on pedagogy, assessment, and innovation.
17. Implement peer observation and knowledge-sharing sessions among faculty.
18. Ensure availability of both traditional and low-cost teaching materials.
19. Promote reflective teaching and innovation through institutional support.

For Professional Development Providers

20. Focus on assessment diversity, adaptive teaching, and engagement strategies.
21. Provide syllabus, activity guides, and assessment tools for immediate application.
22. Equip teachers with strategies for collecting and applying student feedback effectively.

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